

TOO MUCH TIME, OR TOO LITTLE

by

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A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Architecture
in
Engineering

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2015
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ABSTRACT

To *Homo Faber* (man as maker), the Promethean revolt against nature is an act of mastership.

Guided by the ideals of utility and beauty, the world of *making* is always rooted in the transformation of means into ends. Human life is fragile; the objects we create give us durability. They reify what would otherwise be lost with every generation. They condition our existence. Like the table that both separates and unites, our experience of others is rooted in an in-between world of shared things. However, because we are never fully conditioned beings — that is, we are never fully for or against others — the world of things never entirely constitutes an end in itself. *Homo Faber* transforms means into ends, which can only ever, once again, become means. If this were not so, we would have built the ideal city, or reached the end of history.

One shortfall of *making* is that it marshals reflection forward, into an idealized future where we make thoughts captive to their utilitarian ends, and deem the infinite newness of each person's unique identity too haphazard. Just as the builder does not need others to accomplish his task, neither does the ruler need the opinion of his subjects to rule; we have replaced the uncertainty of plural action with the conviction inherent in pre-determined ideas.

The line of inquiry follows Hannah Arendt's political theory of the degradation of political space. Storytelling — as both subjective and structural critique — reflects on the mode of acting, as inherited from the tradition of *making*, and the potential harm it poses.

It asks we think about what we are doing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Donald McKay. My committee, Anne Bordeleau, and Robert Jan van Pelt. My parents. My friends: African, UN, and NGO alike.

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John Le Carre - The Mission Song

Right, Skipper.

'One of the world's worst graveyards. Right?'

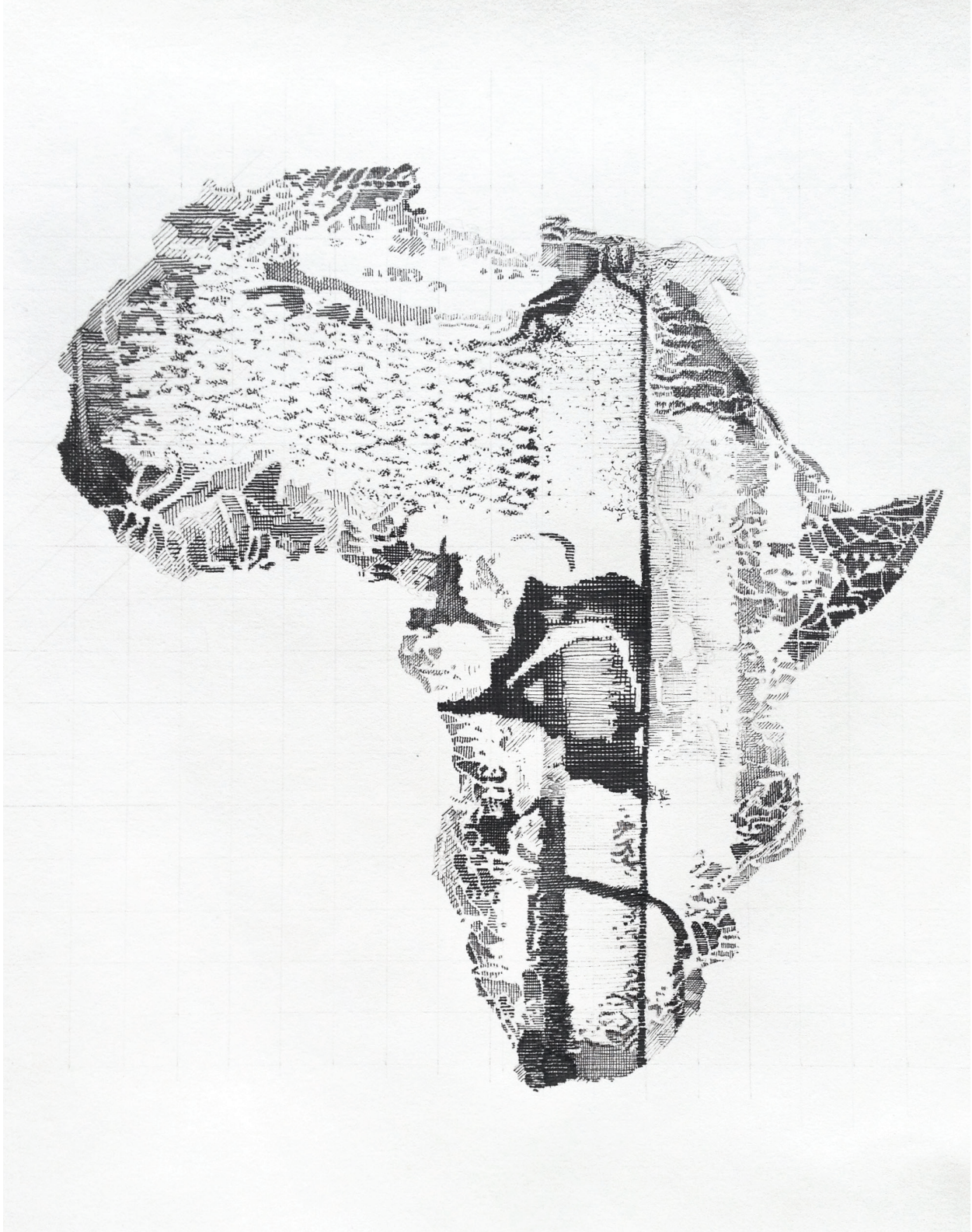
Right. No question. Maybe the worst.

'Chaps dying like flies while we speak. Knee-jerk tribal killings, disease, starvation, ten-year-old soldiers and sheer fucking incompetence from the top down, rape and mayhem galore. Right?'

Right, Skipper.

'Elections won't bring democracy, they'll bring chaos. The winners will scoop the pool and tell the losers to go fuck themselves. The losers will say the game was fixed and take to the bush. And since everyone's voted on ethnic lines anyway, they'll be back where they started and worse.

PREFACE



ERIC ARTHUR BLAIR,

Since independence in the 1960's, outwardly, not much has changed in central Africa. For the past 55 years, the dreams of radical pan-Africanists, the promises of the *urban évolué*, the international clamoring for 'justice', have all but lost their potency. Problematically, the violent transience of the post-colony - its destroyed infrastructure, political corruption, rape, and theft - is the prophetic realization of colonial rhetoric. As Frantz Fanon reminds us in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the colonist's role was to civilize the baser nature of the colonized. "We made this land... If we leave, all is lost, and this land will return to the Dark Ages".¹ From a *New York Times* article published the day after Congolese Independence on July 1st, 1960:

Congo Rises From Stone Age to Statehood in Few Decades... Fifty-five years ago, in the heartland of darkest Africa, which formally became the independent Republic of Congo today, the wheel was not used, language was not written, cannibalism and witchcraft were common, and the site of the capital, Leopoldville, was still a dense jungle.²

Following this western lineage further, the return of primitivist violence in the post-colony would signal not simply the atavism of western values, but a wider incompatibility with civilization; intervention becomes, not simply a function of aid, but a moral necessity. As put by a colonialist,

In entering into contact with [the Bantu peoples] the Belgians have found them in a state of extreme barbarity and corruption. Nothing which these disinherited peoples remember, nothing in their traditions, their social life, nor the material objects which surround them give any indication of a better period in the past... The intelligence of the black, although quite lively, only seems to exercise itself in evil.³

During his independence speech, King Baudouin of Belgium made no defense for Belgian atrocities committed under colonialism; instead he turned to the wider civilizing mission:

For eighty years Belgium has sent your land the best of her sons, first to

deliver the Congo basin from the odious slave trade which was decimating its population. Later to bring together the different tribes which, though former enemies, are now preparing to form the greatest of the Independent states of Africa.⁴

King Baudouin went on to praise the colonial progress in building communications, founding medical services and schools, modernizing agricultural production, constructing cities, and developing industry. “It is your job, gentlemen, to show that we were right in trusting you.”⁵

In the Manichean world of colonial compartmentalization, ‘development’ was necessary to sublimate the deeper colonial function of exploitation. As Fanon writes,

The customs of the colonized, their traditions, their myths, especially their myths, are the very mark of this indigence and innate depravity. This is why we should place DDT, which destroys parasites, carriers of disease, on the same level as Christianity, which roots out heresy, natural impulses, and evil. The decline of yellow fever and the advances made by evangelizing form part of the same balance sheet.⁶

Given the blatant obliqueness of colonial action — racism disguised as universal humanism, or citizenship with no intention of equality — situating interventionist action in the post-colony is problematic. Belying its stated moral imperative, or worldly ‘good’, interventionist action may qualify its colonial lineage; if so, it risks propagating the status quo, or worse, generating newer forms of exploitation. Beyond the simplistic reductionism of racism, violence and disorder in the post-colony remains a complex north-south collaboration.

Written at the height of independence movements in 1961, *The Wretched of the Earth* begged the liberated African nations to shed their colonial identity. If they merely wanted to follow the colonial path, leave it to the Europeans to do so. Liberation for

Fanon was not merely an end in itself, where the re-organization of wealth, land or power, would bring justice. Rather, he sought to create a new identity for the African man: “For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must make a new start, develop a new way of thinking, and endeavor to create a new man.”⁷

-

Before reflecting on development in Africa, it is worth reflecting on development, or *making*, within the wider frame of human activity. In the 1958 book *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt argued that the apolitical shift towards *making* has come largely at the expense of political *action*. “The modern age, in its early concern with tangible products and demonstrable profits or its later obsession with smooth functioning and sociability, was not the first to denounce the idle uselessness of action and speech in particular and of politics in general.”⁸ The historic panacea offered for the three-part failings of *action* — the futility of its product, the unpredictability of its outcome, and the anonymity of its authors — was to eliminate plurality and substitute it with hegemony. To exemplify this, Arendt pointed to the utopian reorganization of Greek politics initiated by the philosophers’ mistrust of action, to whose end the ‘quiet of contemplation’ has permeated modern interventionist logic.

From the fact that no meaningful human life exists outside the presence of others, life is defined by the living together of men. If men were not distinct, language or action would not be necessary to mediate between identical needs. If men were not equal, no comprehension between actors would be possible. Unlike togetherness, a function of the serial reproduction of like beings, plurality is defined by the presence of *others*. For

Arendt, the paradox inherent within a plurality requires action and speech to mediate disparate agents. Unlike *making*, Arendtian action is the only product of human life whose existence is owed exclusively to the coming together of people.

The term *action* has its roots in the interrelated Greek terms *archein*, ‘to begin’, and *prattein*, ‘to achieve’, (corresponding to the latin verbs *agere* ‘to set in motion’ and *gerere* ‘to bear’). It is the nature of beginning, writes Arendt, that newness is not an abstraction but the embodiment of the diversity we inherit from birth. The ability to begin, to make real the image of our uniqueness, is thus the actualization of the human condition of plurality.

Compared with *making*, where a given end could be effectively communicated by sign language (its idea already collectively held) or good and bad works achieved in anonymous silence or violence (where the ‘self’ is hidden from others), action requires the accompaniment of speech precisely because it reveals to others what is not known already, reveals the uniqueness of the beginner. It is because we are never fully conditioned beings (affected by *made* objects), that the course of action cannot be predicted by what preceded it. By beginning, the actor risks the disclosure of his image, whilst in appearing the actor cannot escape his subjective revelation.

The action he begins is humanly disclosed by the word, and though his deed can be perceived in its brute physical appearance without verbal accompaniment, it becomes relevant only through the spoken word in which he identifies himself as the actor, announcing what he does, has done, and intends to do.⁹

The connection between revelation and beginning becomes important when we attempt to understand meaning. Though words and deeds may be overt and intentional, the specific consequence of the initial and subsequent acts remain hidden to the beginner,

and to others who carry the action forward. Fundamentally, this is because human uniqueness cannot be described without resorting to a description of commonalities, the qualities they share with others. “It [the nature of being] excludes in principle our ever being able to handle these affairs as we handle things whose nature is at our disposal because we can name them.”¹⁰ In our collective living together as individuals, neither subjecting nor subject to other people, or even entirely for or against each other, the *beginner* and the *achiever* are non-linear, non-exclusive functions. Because the actor always moves among and in relation to other acting beings, he is “never merely a ‘doer’ but always, and at the same time, a sufferer.”¹¹ Meaning only becomes apparent at the end of the event, its course laid bare in the backwards glance of history.

...[I]n any series of events that together form a story with a unique meaning we can at best isolate the agent who set the whole process into motion; and although this agent frequently remains the subject, the “hero” of the story, we never can point unequivocally to him as the author of its eventual outcome.¹²

From the standpoint of what is known or commonly understood, the variability of action is shorthand for the unpredictability of its outcome. *Archein*, to begin, can be understood as newness, rather than merely motion.

The new always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical laws and their probability, which for all practical, everyday purposes amounts to certainty; the new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle. The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected of him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. And this again is possible only because each man is unique¹³

The boundlessness of action, with its simultaneous chains of reaction, could only ever be contained by either the homogenization of identity (where action is directed in singular for or against) or the removal of the potential for beginning altogether (the

banishment of the social agent). *Natality*, Arendt's term to signify the miracle of beginning is rooted in appearing in the world with others as distinct but equal voices.

The space of action is never a static construct, never reduced to a product. Though legislation and architecture may augment or limit the space where people come together, they are not themselves political action. The space of appearance is not a physical space, but that which exists between people. As such, the law whose function it is to keep society within bounds, and architecture, which protects the boundaries of the territories from outside, are never fully able to suppress action.

The boundlessness of action is only the other side of its tremendous capacity for establishing relationships, that is, its specific productivity; this is why the old virtue of moderation, of keeping within bounds, is indeed one of the political virtues par excellence...¹⁴

To Arendt, the Platonic shift was fundamentally an insertion of philosophy into political theory, ostensibly to justify the philosopher's way of life. The central division between philosophy and politics (with respect to action) was that, philosophically, the good, or the beautiful, was located somewhere outside of human affairs: the 'eternal' could only be understood in the absolute quiet of contemplation. "Every movement, the movements of body and soul as well as of speech and reasoning, must cease before truth".¹⁵ Freedom for the philosophers, meant independence from human wants or needs. From the notion that nothing of human hands could match the beauty and truth of the physical kosmos, Plato and subsequent philosophers took from the eternal the 'idea' of good which was then applied to human affairs. Against the vagaries of plurality, the philosopher-king remained unmoved by others. Against the invisible hand of authorship, the philosopher-king remained master. Accordingly, a wedge was driven into the

political apparatus of action. By removing plurality from action, *archein*, 'to begin', increasingly lost its dependence on *prattein*, 'to achieve', and in so doing changed its meaning altogether. Through the isolation of *archein* from *prattein*, the original meaning, 'to begin', changed into 'to lead', and finally, 'to rule', until ultimately 'beginning' disappeared altogether, and the latter part *prattein*, 'to achieve', subsumed the entire definition of action. In this way, the *idea* (manifest in standards and rules) supplanted the corrupting variability of words and deeds. With the objectivity of *ideas* lying outside the realm of others, one man remained master of his doing from beginning to end. The meaning of action became more closely related to making. As Arendt writes,

...the division between knowing and doing, so alien to the realm of action, whose validity and meaningfulness are destroyed the moment thought and action part company, is an everyday experience in fabrication, whose processes obviously fall into two parts: first, perceiving the image or shape (*eidos*) of the product-to-be, and then organizing the means and starting the execution.¹⁶

Central to this division (where those who know do not do, and those who do, do not know) is the conception of the ruler who by virtue of the *idea* 'makes' his City as the sculptor makes a statue. Through law, the management of individual subjectivity could be reduced to its most basic function.

In the Republic, [Plato's] division between rulers and ruled is guided by the relationship between expert and layman; in the Statesman, he takes his bearings from the relation between knowing and doing; and in the Laws, the execution of unchangeable laws is all that is left to the statesman or necessary for the functioning of the public realm. What is most striking in this development is the progressive shrinkage of faculties needed for the mastering of politics.¹⁷

The utopian hubris of the mastery of human affairs, implied in the reduction of political action to that of the will of a few 'strong men', is predicated on the notion that society can be 'made' in the

first place. The hallmark of action in its singular form (whether as individual, or as a group) is that despite its outward appearance of plural agents, it is structurally against plurality. A *work* bestowed from benefactor to recipient is always unidirectional, and fails to establish a relationship between actors.

From the Arendtian perspective of action, the historic continuum of empire, third-world, global-south, can be re-imagined not from the merits espoused by western civilizing missions — the waves of architects, lawyers, politicians and journalists — but from the collapse of the commons underlying durability-focused intervention. This is not to say that the products of *work*, the human artifact, are not necessary for productive life. It is against the impermanence of nature and destructiveness of time, that work overcomes. The powerlessness of reproduction, and the temporality of action would make no gains if there was not the worldliness of work. However, against these needs, stands the Arendtian critique of the substitution of *making* for *acting*. The sovereignty of the individual and his or her idea(ls) risks in the first instance reducing action to productive categories of means and ends, and in the second, removing from human affairs the condition of *natality*. By establishing ‘higher’ ends at the outset, the category of means is rendered unaccountable. “As long as we believe that we deal with ends and means in the political realm, we shall not be able to prevent anybody’s using all means to pursue recognized ends.”¹⁸ Secondly, perceived sovereignty, the mastery of self and society, necessarily comes at the price of plurality. From the connection Arendt has established between plurality and *natality*, the overcoming of plurality would be less a victory of individual sovereignty than the arbitrary domination of others.

The popular belief in a “strong man” who, isolated against others, owes his strength to his being alone is either sheer superstition, based on the delusion

that we can “make” something in the realm of human affairs—“make” institutions or laws, for instance, as we make tables and chairs, or make men “better” or “worse”—or it is conscious despair of all action, political and non-political, coupled with the utopian hope that it may be possible to treat men as one treats other “material”.¹⁹



[Fig. 0.2]

PART I: Procure Saint Anne | 1914

KINSHASA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



1.1

Photography, it is said, is illegal. Where it is not illegal, it is culturally unacceptable. I am told that for 60 USD you can purchase a photography permit, which, in theory, takes you over the first hurdle, but in practice gets you over neither. The reality is, the legitimate flow of money is rerouted to local actors who simply arrogate the authority of the state. Formally known as a bribe.

It is a curious thing to officially disallow photography. Not the least of practical reasons being the ubiquitous presences of camera-equipped cell phones across Africa. What is being forbidden then? Do shame and poverty run parallel, where the exploitation inherent in perverse images inflames reactionary indignation? Or is it not self-conscious at all, but self-defensive: a schizophrenic state always hiding from others while invasively present at its furthest margins, simultaneously filling all space while destructively absent. This totalitarian state sees threat everywhere; it is afraid of all power, indistinguishably confusing friend from foe. This is at least possible given Mobutu's lineage of division, corruption, and antagonism, which, while succeeding in preserving its own existence, simultaneously bled itself to debilitation. Or in more recent context, Kabila (the father) refusing foreign observers into his country to see how genocidal his presidential march really was. This same Kabila, the forty-year communist rebel at the state's periphery turned tyrant in Kinshasa, was gunned down four years into office by his most trusted allies, the Kadogo youth.

At its most basic, photography is time and place, a record of a particular world. A negation of this common grounding is a negation of objective reality. Without the objects that form a common relation between and beyond people, collective life is reduced to a scattering of private subjects. Symbolically, the space of appearance — the public realm — collapses. In any case, the people don't like it either. And I am not sure why.

1.2

This evening, having depleted my regular stock of bananas, avocados, and bread, I went out in search of dinner. Some unknown chest condition causing crushing pain when I swallow leaves me reduced to light or liquid fare. There are bright neon lights in dark back-alley bars, and the dull nausea of fluorescents in Lebanese-owned late-night groceries. It is eleven pm and the district doesn't offer prepared and cheap food. People are around on the vast boulevard, but cheap food is not. Coming out from dark streets, I see the Hotel Memling as a spectacular thing at this hour. In the unflattering and undiscerning evenness of sunlight it seems more like an overweight 50's socialite than a modern luxury. Where the modern image cannot be preserved structurally, it is at least done symbolically. Here, foreign dollars are converted into generators and once again into watts. With this magic trick the hotel lobby and adjacent plaza is unusually vital. Across the street there's an expensive pizza joint and another chicken restaurant. Both places are sanitary, a copy of western fast-food decorum with a slew of young Congolese and the occasional Mzungu clientele. My equivalent of one or two USD won't go far; prices are western, not Fufu. Heading further north a foul-breathed man of my age and build hustles up behind me, throwing an arm over my shoulder. "Hello my friend", we start. "What's your name?" With inane humor. "Where's the rest of this drink for me, my friend?" The two of us just strolling down the blank street, my companion insisting over and over he's going to knife me for my money. At first it's scary, but nothing happens, it becomes just a stupid conversation. First, I have no money on me; though that doesn't make any real difference to his threats. Second, he just repeats the same words to me. Maybe this impotence is the result of a drunken nervous system switchman confusing the call for action with bland speech. He holds my shoulder the whole way. Drinking has clearly not sapped his strength. It seems he just wants to threaten this white

stranger, a joke of bravado. Near the end of the street he hasn't knifed me yet, nor have I seen anyone around to make sense of what is happening. We are in our own little world, like a suspended form of absence, a null danger in a null space. He says, "My friends are at the bar up ahead. We are going to really fuck you up."

Well. Clearly there's no point in sticking around to discover the truth of this enterprising ambition.

1.3

Building on King Leopold II's exploitation of ivory and rubber under the penal colony in 1885, in the Congo Free State, Belgium's colonial possession in 1959 would come to produce 10% of the world's copper, 50% of its cobalt and some 70% of its industrial diamonds.¹ When the Belgians left the Congo in 1960, King Baudouin's departing speech used the infrastructural development tied to extraction as a rhetorical device to aggrandize the civilizing accomplishments of colonial rule. By the date of independence, rail networks joined the mineral rich southeast to Stanleyville port in the middle of the jungle and the capital city Leopoldville, road networks crossed national and transnational territories, while primary schools and church hospitals proliferated in small and large towns alike. The Congo's first prime-minister, Patrice Lumumba, was not welcome to speak at Baudouin's ceremony, but did so anyways. He argued, the nature of development (infrastructural or cultural) did not root itself in the betterment of the Congolese people, just as colonial law did not exist to preserve the harmony of the Congolese society. The two orders, he claimed, represented nothing greater than the material and supra-structural

arms of the colonial apparatus, whose function centered on natural resource extraction. Crop production was enforced. Roads were maintained for mines. The chimera of education produced nothing greater than a servile, impotent mass.² With access to the means of production or self-direction actively suppressed through exclusion, the colonial civilizing mission never wanted to ameliorate the living standards of the colonized; to do so would threaten the legitimacy of their rule.

The Congolese had no political voice, no rights to own land or to travel freely. They were subject to curfews in urban areas, in rural areas, to forced labour. Though primary schools abounded, there was no higher education available except in Catholic seminaries. Nor were students allowed to study in Belgium.³

The obfuscating principle of development meant that as a moral imperative, colonial intervention had no need for reciprocal political involvement from the Congolese.

In other words, up until 1959, political rights did not need to exist so long as the colonial subject was socially and economically supported.⁴

1.4



It's a gated compound like many others, differentiated by the large number of people both inside and out. There is a cathedral at the north entrance, set in a grove-like serenity. Those congregational members not singing inside are strolling around outside in practical silence. Outside the front gate, hectic crowds eddy in the confluence of two major streets, two compounds, a large public square, and a little further away, the train station and the American embassy.

The only other people staying in the hotel are two women, both American, and both Christian. They are here to pick up a child they chose to bring back to the States. There is a meeting going on at the bar with an adoption agency's representative, one of the American ladies, and her partner. She is cradling the baby and not paying much attention to the Congolese man. Earlier today, the younger lady recounted to me the whole gamut of adoption agencies she had to choose from, all with their own particularities, not all trustworthy or good. She tells me she is flying her baby home tomorrow. For medical purposes they are flying first class. 5000 USD of luxury for a child when less than 10 cents US buys a bushel of bananas. Slippery slope, I guess. When she speaks, she reminds me of what Romeo Dallaire wrote of his experience in Rwanda, the difference in their situations clearly differentiating the two sets of parents, nevertheless...

Before I had held this boy, I had agreed with the aid workers and representatives of both the warring armies that I would not permit any exporting of Rwandan orphans to foreign places. When confronted by such requests from humanitarian organizations, I would argue that the money to move a hundred kids by plane to France or Belgium could help build, staff and sustain Rwandan orphanages that could house three thousand children. This one boy eradicated all my arguments. I could see myself arriving at the terminal in Montreal like a latter-day St. Christopher with the boy cradled in my arms, and my wife, Beth, there ready to embrace him.¹

1.5

At the prospect of political participation in the late 1950's, a profusion of largely tribal-based parties emerged. These ranged from wider pan-regional ethnic groupings to the otherwise smaller groups, of limited local-importance only. Only the MNC (Mouvement National Congolais) of Patrice Lumumba, and Albert Kalonji who split from the MNC, emerged as national entities. In Congo's richest province of Katanga, where large copper extracting operations were located, the Lunda-dominated Conkat party favored independence for itself. Led by Moise Tshombe, the province had strong ties to Belgian, British and American companies. Politically, the Conkat party strongly advocated continued ties with Belgium.¹

Unlike the French in Algiers and West Africa, the Belgian overseers were not interested in a protracted colonial war, allowing independence movements to progress relatively quickly. After Lumumba's arrest, and wide-spread national violence demanding independence, the Belgians largely gambled on a form of soft withdrawal, whereby political and economic links would remain, tying the new administration to Belgium. Having already obfuscated the means of state control, they naively assumed that their monopoly on skill and the strangulation of economic means would require the elected government to remain dependent on colonial skill to fulfill top administrative, military and business roles.

[At independence] No national or even provincial elections had ever been held. The lack of skilled personnel was acute. In the top ranks of the civil service no more than three Congolese out of an establishment of 1,400 held posts and two of those were recent appointments. By 1960 the sum total of university graduates was thirty. Indeed, the largest complement of trained manpower were priests: of those there were more than six hundred. At the end of the 1959-1960 academic year, only 136 children completed secondary education. There were no Congolese doctors, no secondary

school teachers, no army officers. The first contingent of Congolese officer cadets to be sent for training in Belgium was not due to return until 1963.² Functionally, this self-importance was true, though not accepted. Moderate parties sympathetic to the colonists lost heavily in the national elections of 1960, such that with independence on 30th of June 1960, Lumumba's MNC held the majority, with 26% of the vote. With key areas remained outside of his control however, — Katanga (the nation's wealth) and Kinshasha (the nation's *évolues*), — he was forced to form a fragile coalition with 12 other parties.³

Even before Congolese independence, the U.S. Government attempted to ensure the election of a pro-Western Congolese government by supporting sympathetic leaders. In a cable written on April 18 1960, a month before the elections, the CIA Africa Division Chief Tweedy wrote, "We are not opposed to giving discreet support (provided it is not attributable to the United States Government) to a limited number of candidates if specific justification is provided in each case."⁴ Further, "we are opposed to any 'stop Lumumba' campaign. He is one of the few, if not only, Congolese leaders with a Congo-wide appeal and standing."⁵

Largely this is stated not for their particular sympathy towards a leader of national importance, but rather the realization that an overtly American-backed "anti-Lumumba campaign could backfire."⁶

1.6

One thing I have noticed, walking around, is that there is a near-universal phenomenon almost completely absent in Kinshasa. The DRC ranks as one of the poorest countries in the world, but

there are few people begging, or at least begging with irrefutable insistence. Not that I care much; it simply runs against the current of much of my experience. For example, when last in Africa, in West Africa, particularly Ghana, it was not unheard of to have the pejorative 'racist' leveled at you for turning down a 'free gift' or not buying a completely useless object (like a car part for my non-existent 4x4).

I suppose the cultural, economic, or customary variability between these two regions would render any comparison difficult. However, Ghana has a much stronger western presence. Young travellers, NGO workers, missionaries, football coaches, all visit the Kenya-of-the-west. Kinshasa has next to none of these carefree faces. Or at least not visibly so. It would seem, quite apart from the lofty sentiment of inclusion and exposure, one of the effects of tourism is to reinforce difference. The more the variety of human interaction is reduced to a singular marker (tourist, aid-worker, missionary), the nuanced differences between people are reduced to signified roles. The more pressure applied, the sharper the category of means/ends is set.

When sending in an application for a Congolese tourist visa, one is required to show the usual proof of subsistence, itinerary, yellow fever vaccination record, and employment letter. In addition, you are required to have a letter of reference, and a hotel reservation or letter of invitation from a local signed by the police. The only hotels that I can find are what guidebooks tell me are 'luxury' hotels, at 100\$ or more a night. Some, 300-400\$. It is simpler and cheaper to 'shop' a reservation and get on with it. The cost of the visa itself is 300 USD, allowing a single entry of 3 months duration. There is no tourist draw to the Congo. There are businessmen and bureaucracies. Those that go, are sent. The Kin-la-belle economy is run on expense accounts.

1.7

What would follow in the wake of the disastrous start to post-colonial Congo would be both a continuation of exploitation coupled with acute political suppression: the binding of post-colonial Congolese hands, much the same as colonialism. The Congo Crisis, as it has come to be known, started immediately after independence on June 30th, 1960, and lasting until Mobutu's second coup of 1965. The Crisis outwardly unfolded as a series of events, inconspicuously reduced to the incompetence of national political process. Quite apart from this, in crisis the Congo experienced a tourniquet of extra-national political contestants: newly minted UN brigades, Belgian soldiers, American diplomats, Soviet Union ordinance and Chinese propaganda.

On the fifth of July 1960 — within the first few days of independence — the army mutinied. In the transference of power that saw many Congolese urban elites gain access to state wealth, many in the army resented their lack of social mobility. Unlike the state, which was now in the hands of nationals, the army remained largely run by an eleven hundred strong officer corps of Belgians. A purported insult by then-commander General Emile Janssens —“before independence = after independence”¹ — re-affirmed for the Africans that the authorities would not readily permit ‘africanization’. With the demand for his resignation turning into riots, this violence spread to other garrisons, and aggression soon turned towards the 100 000 European civilian population, causing a mass exodus. This white flight, in turn, fuelled a massive shortage of skilled workers. In reaction to the riots, Lumumba opted to replace the entire army officer class with nationals, appointing Victor Lundula as army commander, and his trusted personal aide, Joseph Mobutu, as his Chief of Staff. Like Lumumba in the civil service, Mobutu's rank of sergeant-major had been the highest rank attained by a national during colonial rule.

Reaction to the continued mutiny proceeded in a tit-for-tat process of consolidation of control.

The Belgian government at first tried to persuade Lumumba to permit Belgian troops stationed in the Congo to restore order, but when Lumumba refused it, it unilaterally orders Belgian troops into action and arranged to fly in reinforcements. As Belgian troops took control of key points like Leopoldville airport, Lumumba became convinced that Belgium was trying to re-impose its rule. He broke off diplomatic relations and declared that, as far as he was concerned, the Congo was now at war with Belgium.²

On the 11th of July, the mineral rich state of Katanga, under the leadership of Moise Tschombe, seized on the growing chaos in the country by announced its secession from the Congolese state. The Belgians in Katanga actively disarmed Congolese troops, while training local Katangan soldiers.

This show of force helped ensure the continued stability of the mining sector while maintaining a political base within the country.

1.8

Flying into Kinshasa, DRC at night – having passed through Brussels, Belgium, at mid-day – is flatly unnerving. It is as if the security engendered by our technological suspension from the heavens belies the fact that I am looking at a city leveled by a great fire. Airport traffic control has denied us immediate landing, so we circle over Kinshasa in a wide arc. With an Angolan man, speaking in broken French and Portuguese, we passed the delay talking about chess. The plane has only a stopover in Kinshasa on its way

to the Angolan capital Luanda afterwards. Congo, I think, some 5 million dead since the war started in 1996. Angola, I remember, and 25 years of protracted and horrific civil war. It seems more like the city has been on fire, the last fuels consumed in a waste of darkness. It is not the bright glow of a million city lights, but what an imagined Hamburg or Dresden must have looked like. Maybe though, the televised image projects the heart of darkness. The unease I have is that of a colonist about to land in the colonial outpost.

The airplane really should have cranked up its heat before landing. The tropical heat and humidity is so foreign to the frigid cabin that it disorients you in first steps on the tarmac. It didn't help any that, added to this discomfort, I was experiencing a general fear, having little understanding of where I was or where I wanted to be. Inside the small terminal building, I first asked my yellow-fever-vaccine-check lady if she knew how to get into town, or, where I should stay. If I waited for her to finish her shift she'd drive me in for 60 USD, and we'd take it from there. I was not overly impressed with this quote (which was the same as the taxis outside) so I craned over the baggage room with hopes of finding the other westerners I had seen on the plane. Apart from a rough looking French man, the best option seemed to be an older lady who, at first glance, looked like she might have spent her youth aligning her sympathies with the free-spirited war-resistance, but who now worked for USAID. We had a lovely chat, but ultimately unproductive; company policy banned non-staff occupancy of staff vehicles. I waited for my bag in the dim room, and decided to walk into town rather than pay the tourist fare asked by taxis and yellow fever vaccination program ladies. In hindsight this would have been a terrible idea. Not the least of reasons being the airport is twenty kilometers from town, and worse, it was midnight. My USAID friend however talked to her driver, who then caught me

by the shoulder and informed me that the fellow to my right was a driver for an abbey-cum-hotel in town. Well, I'll be damned. I tucked in behind the original party going to Procure St. Anne (a *mzungu* and his younger African partner) while our escort weaved a path through the bribe-hungry army and police.

The French expat I followed into town last night has left. While talking to him on the ride in, he had mentioned a curious social prejudice favoring the Congolese over the Rwandans. His partner, who may have been either, made no protest to this stereotyping. The Congolese are like the Italians, amicable and frank. The Rwandans, are more like the Swiss, reticent and formal.

1.9



Ed is an older man, a doctor, and he's travelling central Africa with Sally, a younger Anglo/Aussie. Ed today, this afternoon to be precise, was walking down the main drag of Kinshasa, Le 30 Juin. This is ostensibly the main boulevard of town. It is wide, wider than any traffic needs it to be, or at least until a military parade roles out. It is busy, though at its odd scale, objects float in space, rather than occupy it. Most of the way down its long reach there are few people walking, though plenty enough in vehicles and

shops. As expected for a main drag of colonial lineage, it retains much of its wealth and status. The Lebanese have their miniatures of the global north. Foreign-financed office towers stand proud. Rich hotels stockpile the necessary opulence for their enclaved businessmen. With airline offices on the boulevard, the bird-song of poverty — to the few broken from its cage — promise Eden in the form of the European Union.

While Ed was out walking, bearing towards the grocery store, a police officer approached him. The man asked for Ed's identification, so Ed gave his photocopies. These were insufficient. Ed then asked to see the man's badge, which he provided. As Ed pulled out his real passport from his money belt concealed in his pants, another man took him from behind and pushed him into the back of their car. A bag was placed over his head and a gun pushed to his temple. He was then freed of his money. Some 2000 USD. He says later he had such a large sum because he was unsure of how money worked in the DRC (having just crossed over from the more stable Congo Republic). He says he was threatened repeatedly for being an American. Nothing, however, comes of it. Instead, he was driven around for an hour to an acceptable location and dumped. Nice enough that he was given back his visa and his passport, and most importantly, his life.

Now I know. If a policeman looks legitimate, he very well might be. Legitimacy just means you get to carry a gun. Really, who is copying who in a criminal state?

1.10

Despite representing a neutral party, the UN entered into the Congo under the umbrella of *realpolitik*. In its attempt to remain apolitical, it succeeded in heavily aiding anti-Lumumbist elements (it was one).

In the UN's largest operation since its inception¹ — under the local title ONUC (United Nations Operation in the Congo) — it responded to the crisis by initiating a rapid bi-directional intervention: first by airlifting a majority African peacekeeping brigade to the Congo, while secondarily, organizing a civilian task force to fill the administrative gap left by the chaos.² For Lumumba, the largest threat to stability stemmed from the continued Belgian presence, which he claimed undermined his rule of a sovereign state. Not having control of his own army, he demanded the UN military peacekeepers be used to end both Belgian occupation, and Belgian orchestrated successions in Katanga and South-Kasai.

Despite the UN's position as an independent body, its bilateral relationship to the Americans (42% of ONUC's funding was American³) meant ostensibly 'neutral' actions supported a 'western' agenda. Strategically, the Katanga succession was a critical source of revenue for the capital, so its loss accelerated national collapse. If, after the first two weeks of the Crisis, Belgian troops withdrew generally, they did not withdraw from Katanga. After the UN entered Katanga on August 12th 1960 (to remove Belgian military presence) Belgian military and political presence did not dissipate.

To be sure, many of the paratroopers did not really leave the province, as some of them simply discarded their Belgian uniforms and wore the garb of the now defunct colonial military...The Belgian business interests, in close cooperation with the Belgian government, subsidised and supported the secessionist government; mercenaries and 'volunteers' were recruited in Europe (and later in southern Africa) to reinforce the Katangan gendarmerie and to maintain internal security in the province.⁴

Despite the UN affirming that the Katanga succession was an

internal affair, a UN document from October 1960 laid out the international nature of the succession:

In Katanga, Belgian influence is omnipresent. Virtually all key civilian and security posts are either held directly by officials of Belgian nationality or controlled by advisors to recently appointed and often inexperienced Congolese officials.⁵

By middle August, having failed to garner UN support against the Katangan and South-Kasaian successions, Lumumba appealed to the Soviets. The Americans would not risk the central African nation falling away from American influence. Prior to the introduction of the Soviets into the Congo, the Americans had largely hoped for an internal opposition to Lumumba. In a memo dated August 11th 1960,

Reminding [Identity 1] and others that if they act prematurely it will give Lumumba opening to move against opposition, perhaps arresting leaders and or attempting eliminate senate. Also illegal overthrow would force hand United Nations.⁶

If the Soviets replaced the UN in the Congo, there existed two options for the Americans: Force the UN to stay in the Congo, or assassinate Lumumba.

President Eisenhower said that the possibility that the United Nations would be forced out was simply inconceivable, and declared that the United States should keep the United Nations in the Congo, even if it had to ask for European troops or if such action was used by the Soviets to start a fight.⁷

This is despite the fact that, “Hammaraskjold and Ambassador Lodge doubted whether the United Nations could stay if the Congolese Government were opposed.”⁸

1.11



I went looking for the Canadian Embassy this morning. The trip took me five kilometers east, to the edge of the rich district of Gombe. The government buildings, business offices and the expats are there. Walking around with my crumbling and pixelated Google-map, unsupported by street signs, I got quite lost, quite quickly. Given the monotony of walls and streets, people have very little geographic knowledge. Everything is behind a wall you can't see over.

Street life here contrasts the moving and immobile city. In our cities, we westerners only see the moving city, the space of in-between. The idle men and women behind walls, drive the world of production and reproduction is private. Here of course, there are those behind walls, but only a few compared to the men and women on the streets plying their goods the informal market. The private realm here has expanded to fill the streets. Where I walk, there are a huge number of people whizzing around in chaos. Vans, taxis, SUV's, even a pack of *mzungus* out for an afternoon jog. Against this, there are an even larger number of men and women sitting all day in silence and boredom, turned to stone by the sun, or by penury. Like the walls behind them, they sell what they can, but mostly they just sit and watch the city. With its extremely wide streets and leveled shoulders, these wealthy districts create a bizarre vacuum in space, deprived of meaningful density. It is reminiscent of the old stone forts; only here there are hundreds of them. Long walls and empty space. People are visible, bullets unobstructed.

For a time I walk with a man I greet with a smile and ask for directions. He doesn't know about what I'm asking because he's

from the northern outskirts, but still, he greets me warmly and we talk for a time. With not much else to give distraction against the walls, we continue our conversation. For many reasons, this is not a simple conversation. The most obvious potential short-circuit is the difference in our wealth. That is, it is the prejudice of the colonial legacy to think that every word spoken between the colonizer and the colonized would sublimate a truth whitewashed by cordiality. The second short-circuit is my particularly unprofitable French. It is clear however, and much to my surprise, neither issue takes shape. My communication, if not my language, is enough to engender understanding, and for what it is worth, he carries on with the discussion regardless of any particular moral or political justification to do otherwise. It is by and large a banal encounter. I suppose the hyper-activity of racism is defeated by the ordinary.

After four hours trying to find the embassy on foot, I settle for taking a shared taxi. Fifty cents later I am dropped off absolutely nowhere near the Canadian embassy. I do make it there eventually, but by the time I have walked another hour it is closed for the day. I tried, I figure, and they don't really need to know I'm here. The taxi back along the great spinal avenue is sixty cents and I am home by six.

1.12

Lumumba's invasion of Kasai was disastrous, with aggression towards the Baluba described by UN secretary-general Hammarskjöld as having 'the characteristics of the crime of genocide.'¹ Despite Kasa-Vubu initially supporting Lumumba's rejection of the

Belgians and acceptance of the Soviets, he announced on the 5th of September 1960 he was renouncing Lumumba. Lumumba in turn, renounced Kasa-Vubu. The political dead-lock was usurped by Mobutu's first coup. Kasa-Vubu was re-instated as president while Lumumba was forced into hiding. American involvement up to this point remained covert, yet clear in its objectives. From a memo dated August 11, 1960, describing how to precipitate the fall of Lumumba:

Launch extensive [less than 1 line not declassified] campaign ([less than 1 line not declassified] meetings) by assisting local political groups with the funds and guidance to take anti Commie line and oppose Lumumba
Cultivate and attempt recruit members current govt to keep foot in Lumumba camp. Although believe would be better oust him, do not want become tied irrevocably to opposition, if it not able achieve goals. Also would use such assets to try moderate Lumumba govt and obtain political intel.²

Kasa-Vubu's Mobutu-derived, American-supported, coup of September 14th, 1960 was "coordinated with UNOC at highest levels here".³ Americans did not content themselves with simple sponsorship, choosing instead to actively script actions for their national puppets. From a memo dated September 9th, 1960:

We [Department of State] are distressed at apparent inactivity Kasavubu at this crucial turning point...You should approach him soonest recommending in strongest terms he send message to SYG and publish same. Timing is crucial since Kasavubu's message to SYG must be available before [Security Council] meeting, now scheduled Saturday a.m., Sept 10. Kasavubu should declare he is Chief of State and that he has, in accordance with legal procedures prescribed in "fundamental law" deposed Lumumba. Latter has no official status.⁴

Having understood Lumumba's importance nationally, the Americans proposed his assignation. "To [Chief of Station] comment that Lumumba in opposition is almost as dangerous as

in office, [Identity 1] indicated understood and implied might physically eliminate Lumumba.”⁵

Despite the UN’s awareness and sympathy towards the coup, Hammarskjöld did not approve of the US/Belgian plan to assassinate Lumumba. Hammarskjöld had refused to allow the Congolese authorities to issue an arrest warrant for Lumumba, knowing the arrest was a pretense for his assassination.

Lumumba was arrested on the third of December 1960, flown to Katanga on the 17th of January 1961, and murdered by a Belgian officer⁶, in the presence Katangan soldiers.

1.13

My hotel is next to the American Embassy, poised as ever in its swaddling bulwark. Out front there are a number of UN vehicles, so I assume there’s a UN base nearby. Seeing the two parties side-by-side gives me a moment’s thought. Without question, the Americans overthrew the elected national government back in 1960. In a polemical cloak of necessary evil the Americans actively and illegally manipulated Congolese political sovereignty until, ultimately, they brought to power their kleptocrat-pawn and thug. With the criminal state established, the tyrant-puppet freely robbed his people with impunity. Tactics of divide and rule, though fragile, were protected against foreign and local threats alike by the Cold War benefactor. For 30 years, the tyrant retreated into isolation from his subjects. By fear and suspicion he isolated his subjects from each other. Plurality, or common trust, was rendered impotent.

Tyranny destroys power. That is, until the fall of communism, when the eagle stopped keeping watch, and the old leopard had bled itself to starvation. With horrendous civil war forming in the emptiness of the state, what could resolve conflict with deep roots in post-colonial marginalization? American-backed, UN-regulated, democracy. This is known as a racket.

And what should we make of the American and British allegiance to their new-generation of African neo-liberal leaders Rwanda and Uganda, ostensibly the chief suppliers of chaos and violence in the region? When you stand in front of the US embassy, and see the UN tanks, it is enough to give you pause.

1.14



Soon after Ed got mugged, I was out of money too. I knew the Congolese franc (CF) was next to useless (1 franc = .0011USD). What stood at independence as the second most industrialized African country had been decimated by kleptocracy and corruption until it fell into a tailspin. Inflation stood at 261% in 1990, then jumped to 6,800% by 1994. With war and modernization in parallel over the last twenty years, like Ed, I was unclear of what to expect once I had found a bank. To my amazement, in the

middle of a traffic island I found a bank (later I found many), and outside the bank was a money-changer (which I also learned were everywhere). The bank, when prompted, dispensed completely immaculate US dollar bills. If it were not for the reputable name of the bank itself, I would have been certain these bills were fakes. Imagine going to the world's poorest country, and seeing brand new, 20, 50, or 100 USD bills. It is like seeing a hummer in the middle of the jungle. And herein lies the problem.

The DRC has a completely two-tier monetary system. Western goods are exchanged in USD, while Congolese goods are mostly exchanged in francs. And there is a big gap between them. An orange might cost 50 CF, but a cell phone will cost 30 USD. In Kinshasa, the poor are poor, the seemingly non-existent middle class is skipped, and the rest of the market's goods exist seamlessly in line with a shopping center in Brussels. In day-to-day terms, this can be strikingly annoying. For example, no one in Kinshasa will accept bills with denominations lower than 20 USD, and moreover, no one will accept any bills at all unless they are perfect: bends, dirt or rips are all cause for rejection. When discussed, the most common answer was that the measure existed for counterfeit prevention purposes. Why larger bills are exempt from this scrutiny, or why counterfeiters only make dirty bills is beyond me. If you want to buy anything less than 20 USD, you need francs. Congolese money comes in a huge range of next-to-useless amounts; so converting 20 USD to francs produces a lot of francs. Most westerners will only see the higher range of these francs, 10CF, 20CF, 50CF and 100CF (1, 2, 5, and 10 US cents respectively). Thankfully, as of 2003 the larger 200 and 500 CF are now printed and widely circulate (20 cents and 50 cents respectively). Congolese francs are some of the dirtiest pieces of paper one is likely to find.

1.15

In a portentous beginning to nationhood, the protection of Mobutu against threats both internal and external, coupled with unaccountable support, set the condition of later impunity. With the steady construction of Mobutu as a turret on the margins of western civilization, it was clear that independence from western power did not equal the removal of western domination. *Telegram from the Station in the Congo to the Central Intelligence Agency, Leopoldville, November 3, 1960:*

Agree political realities require some form constitutionality for new govt. However if we to be realistic, must be satisfied with democratic facade as, with possible exception Nigeria, there no real democracy in Africa and Congolese are less prepared than most Africans for true democracy. We have alternatives between [Lumumba] dictatorship which would be anti-Western and pro-Western coalition which would try give Congo stable if not fully democratic govt.¹

After Lumumba's assassination, the Congo was split into four. In addition to the two secessionist movements, the Stanleyville government under Gizenga rivaled the Kinshasa government for legitimacy. In the ensuing power struggle, the Americans quickly moved to coalesce support behind Mobutu, ending the Katanga succession and the Stanleyville (Gizenga) government.

Despite earlier inaction on the part of the UN, the post-Lumumba era saw the UN take an active role in Katanga. First, there was policing action. Belgian soldiers were arrested in September 1961². In August 1962, the Americans brought their might to bear on Tshombe and the UN. "Tshombe... be advised privately that the U.S. will assign troops to UNOC unless Katanga comes to terms with the [Government of Congo] and submits to U.N. decisions."³ On the 21st of January 1963, the UN entered Katanga and ended the succession.⁴

Despite American-backing, the ascension of 'moderates' to political supremacy was not forthright, causing the Americans

to fear the legal ascension of Gizenga (the heir to Lumumba's political power, now located in the east). Discussions of Gizenga joining with the Kinshasa government were sabotaged, and he was arrested in 1962. The Americans next step was to cripple Gizenga's political power.

With G [Gizenga] immunity lifted, several courses of action open to [Adoula, prime minister] and [Government of Congo], including: (a) Court trial and sentence. (b) Leave G alone as private citizen Leop area. (c) Banish G abroad or facilitate his legal departure (Cairo, Tanganyika, or elsewhere)—medical treatment might be possible excuse. (d) Permit G “escape,” with familiar “Lumumba” consequences.⁵

If the Stanleyville government led by Gizenga was a political threat to American dominance in the Congo, the Mulelist uprising of 1964 threatened a military take-over. Pierre Mulele, and the ‘Simba rebellion’ in Kwilu and Kivu provinces, was a resurgence of Gizenga-based, Lumumba-inspired opposition. In response to the insurgency President Kasavubu declared a state of emergency on the 21st, along with a re-insertion of Belgian mercenaries and American armor and funds. The rebellion was lost within a year.

Recognizing the worthlessness of the ANC [Congolese National Army], Tshombe has brought back his ex-Katanga gendarmes from the bush and Angola. To be effective they would require white officers. Some mercenaries have already arrived in Leopoldville. While we wish Tshombe would choose mercenaries other than South Africans and Southern Rhodesians, who are unacceptable to other African states, to Tshombe they may represent the only immediately available resources to stiffen the gendarmes and the ANC.⁶

With elections providing a political deadlock in 1965, Kasavubu (acting president) and Tshombe (made prime-minister in a bid to re-unite the Congo) had arrived at an impasse. Despite popular support for Tshombe declining after the perceived failings of

the Simba rebellion, with Kasavubu proving similarly unpopular, Mobutu stated to his American handlers that he would not support Tshombe as president.⁷ With close consultation with the Americans, “Mobutu stressed he does not repeat not wish to stage another coup d’etat.”⁸ Three days later, on November 22 “[Mobutu] said he believes it imperative that he have funds at his disposition for passage to senior officers...Specifically he asked for CF thirty nine million”⁹. Mobutu led a bloodless coup on November 25, 1965 with his funds approved on November 26, 1965.

1.16

Walking away from the water and the wealth, the streets are not paved, and the buildings are much closer together. A collection of porous shacks have replaced the compounds of concrete in the rich district. There is no money for space or for privacy. The market I duck into after growing bored with the regular colonial grid is a collection of alleyways between shacks. Its stalls are covered with miles of blue tarp to protect against the rain and the sun. The mud floor is soaked, everything is dirty. Because of the density, the dirt, and the sealed enclosure, it also smells much worse than it should. ‘Hi! My name is Ted’ reads the Home Depot t-shirt. Or how about Joe’s trucking from Nevada. The abundance of second-hand crap is astounding. It seems like everything is a hand-me down or an imported fake from china.

On the way home I pass some expensive hotels and some bars. One of the bars is fairly empty but clearly a west-pat haunt. Drinks are some 15\$. Needless to say I don’t stay long; yesterday I bought a Congolese Primus for 50 cents. I’ve heard rumors that of all the

business in the Congo, one of the few to survive all the wars and corruption has been this colonial era beer manufacturer.

Before going home I get some dinner. Unhappily, there are very few street sellers with cooked food, plenty enough bananas and avocado though. From one lady I bought some 50 cents worth of beans. What followed was to me a queer ordeal. After asking if she minded if I stood there to eat, she looked at me strangely as if I had said something rude, talked with the other sellers for about a minute in lingala, then they all got up and left altogether, leaving me her seat. Unfortunately it looked like I had just taken over her stand; now here was a white man selling Maharagwe beans to passers-by. I ate my mountain of beans and went home. Thankfully there was no one around to buy beans from me.

The Place du 30 Juin that bookends the axial boulevard is one of the few designated public spaces in Kinshasa. If south of the Boulevard is largely rich, and north is largely poor, the plaza is a sort of no mans land. It has its own mix of Congolese tourists, drunks, and military police, but it comes with a sterility that is uncommon. The 1939 *King Albert of the Belgians* monument stands at one end, clad in Chinese-sponsored white marble. The actual statue of King Albert fronting the monument was torn down long ago. The fountain in the middle is dry, but there is a slew of construction going on around it (purported to be a grand Emirate-based office/retail scheme to modernize the square). At the back of the plaza stands the Gare-central, designed by the same colonial architect as the Albert Monument.

1.17

Fearing what the Congolese nation might grow into, the Congo was forced into infantilism — slow motion economic collapse — and cradle-bound to a cold-war ideological time warp. The National Intelligence Estimate for the Congo, made on September 27th 1968, described the economic situation bleakly: “due to “rebellion, civil disorder, and neglect...bridges were destroyed, equipment rusted, channels silted, and roads overgrown; reconstruction and repairs have been slow.”¹ Agricultural production was “less than half the pre-independence level, with cotton, rice, and corn from small farms suffering the most.”² In minerals, “the output of gold and tin suffered substantial losses. Diamond production was less affected, but a third of the output was smuggled out of the country, thus depriving the government of revenue.”³ Exports of copper, zinc, and cobalt from Katanga had been maintained at about pre-independence levels, but the price fell in 1968. Meanwhile, finances collapsed. “The country has been kept going only by the infusion of over \$1 billion in economic and military assistance, 60 percent of it from the US much of it through the UN.”⁴ American aid declined by 1968 having secured control for Mobutu. Aid levels for this time were \$2.4 million in military assistance and \$30 million in economic aid, including \$12 million in Food for Peace commodity aid.⁵

What runs through the history of CIA intervention in Congo during the Congo Crisis, apart from its stated Cold War security imperative, is the more steadfast commitment to the destruction of political autonomy and Congolese nationalism. Echoing this, the Belgians had no interest in Congolese political cohesion, resorting to factionalism to support its last claims to the mineral rich territory. Up until at least Mobutu's second coup, the US gave unabated support to the Belgian's colonial presence. Both actors lamented the lack of a national leadership, while simultaneously

propping up regional, tribal and patron networks. This is not to say that the interventionist forces were unaware of the conditions they were supporting. In a memo dated March third 1966 Mobutu is described as providing a “rudderless administration furnishing even less guidance and authority than heretofore.”⁶ lamenting his “gold bed syndrome” while he has “lost touch with reality and economics”, and “risen in souffle like grandiloquence.”⁷ Despite this, Mobutu received international aid for three generations.

It was not until his wider geo-political usefulness had expired at the end of the Cold War, that his patron network collapsed.

1.18

Flying out of Kinshasa is a lot more difficult than I had imagined. The required sequence of actions are completely obfuscated and unmarked. I didn’t asked my driver for help, but his immediate responsiveness to my directional blunders made it clear he regularly led salmon up stream. After getting out of the van and heading for the wrong building entirely, he set me straight.

First, I had to find my way to the back of the main building (which to most of us would seem like the loading dock), where, in one large room packed with people I found tucked away in the corner, a kiosk selling 5 USD travel permits. After getting my bags weighed and inspected from one gentleman in civilian clothes lounging in the middle of the room, another gentleman checked them at the back. And finally after buying myself customs clearance from another man in a tucked away office for some 10 USD (this extortion paid for with my most uselessly dirty, ripped bill in exchange for a stamp, a frown and some words) I was ready to board my plane to Goma.

PART II: **Hotel Versaille | 1970**

GOMA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



2.1

Hey brother,

If permitted, I'd like to tell you a story about last night. It is simple enough so I will shape it simply; what I have heard, what I saw, what I did, what I thought.

Prologue. *My time here has been filled with countless stories about the corruption of order, crippled further by the absence of the rule of law. An Indian man who runs the restaurant I frequent says that he has been robbed by armed thugs three times in the last year. If there is no other recourse for protection, I ask, why he doesn't get a gun for self-defense? He says, "no, no, sir... please.. listen to me...if you go and get a gun, no-one will protect you, they will put you in jail. There is no law of self-defense, you as a westerner have no rights here in the Congo." The reports I read from Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the UN all attest to the impudence that comes from clienteliste networks. Judges are bought over cases of murder, allegiances and social contract hold only so long as they are individually useful, and the police and military move with impunity. There is effectively no universal 'law'; you just cooperate as best you can.*

2.2

Act One. *I was out running again last night. I've started doing this since arriving in Goma. It helps me in a few ways. It is novel, a surreal experience of the other side of city life. It lets me see the city empty, its bones laid bare. Also, I would feel a little too bougie running during the day. On this particular night I was at the compound of a group of NGO's. Brilliantly friendly group. In a simple room like any other room back home, with its familiar bright lights, white tiled floor, large tv and couches, we drank and learned to tango. By 11:30pm I had walked home, changed, and left my*

hotel. I had to wake the doorman up unfortunately, who winced at having to face the giant steel door again, while questioning where I was going at this hour. It is worth mentioning that every muzungu has warned me how bad an idea it is to go out at night. Not just night. I have been warned repeatedly that the area my hotel is in is not safe at any time of day. Yes. Yes. Thank you, I say. You see, here, every white person is attached at the hip to an NGO, or the UN. And so they have curfews that regulate their behavior temporally, and a ban on leaving their vehicle, regulating their behavior spatially. Day and night they drive everywhere in their big white SUV's and only get out at the store or behind a military-grade wall. I think, it is in their insular comfort, many are just afraid of what they can't even do (that is, be physically present in the city).

I run as I run many times before. And it is a beautiful night. About two kilometers in I meet two youths clamoring while running after me, but I outsprint them. No idea what they want, but I don't stop to ask. Nevertheless, it is not a good omen. Generally while out running, I take one of about three or four main routes; the options are fairly limited with an international border to the east, a lake to the south and a mountain to the northwest. So options are either north towards the rebels, or west out of town. In all of them, the streets start safe (my words), and get rougher and rougher closer to the edge of town. There are lights all night in the main streets, with a smattering of noise from the nightclubs; otherwise all the shops are closed. The roads start paved and lit, but soon turn to dirt and dark. Usually there is no one around, maybe the occasional taxi motorcycle, or UN patrol vehicle. Very infrequently, a sprinkle of bars are still open. When they see this shirtless muzungu run past they cheer like they have just seen a pig fly. Largely however, in Goma after dark, no one is in the streets and that suits me just fine.

2.3



After Belgium took over ownership of Ruanda-Urundi in 1922, a socio-economic solution was found to fill the need for both cheap labor in fertile Kivu province, and overpopulation in Rwanda.

By the 1930's the vast resettlement scheme labeled the Mission Immigration Banyarwanda (MIB), brought scores of largely Hutu laborers and Tutsi chiefs to work Belgian plantations. In accommodating the influx, the Belgians did not displace the indigenous Hunde population from the area, but instead created an enclaved chiefdom within the traditional Hunde territory. By independence, the population of Banyarwanda (Hutu and Tutsi from Rwanda) would outnumber the local Hunde population by as much as ten to one in Rutshuru, and three to one in Masisi.¹

The next wave of Banyarwandans into the Kivus' would consist of largely Tutsi elites fleeing political persecution from the Hutu revolution in Rwanda. Unlike the Hutu workers of the MIB, the so-called 59'ers were able to bring with them considerable social and economic capital. Most importantly, they had access to a state patron network through their leading émigré patron, Barthélemy Bisengimana. A Congolese Tutsi, and Mobutu's chief of staff, Bisengimana was closely connected to state power. The process of land accumulation for the Banyarwanda was started, through Bisengimana, by political patronage and furthered by

bribery. In 1966 the Bakajika law converted all public land to the state, while in 1973 Zairianization measures under Mobutu seized Belgian property for the state.² In addition to inheriting former Belgian plantation, the new laws of 1973 effectively ended customary indigenous and peasant land rights, granting greater access to wealth for those connected to the state apparatus.³ Large land concessions, often stolen, were handed over to Tutsi and Hunde chiefs. Seen as 'foreigners' by 'local' tribes, the greatest threat to Banyarwanda land claims acquisitions was their right to citizenship. In order to ensure the Banyarwanda were legally protected, Bisengimana brought about legislation in 1971 granting citizenship to those who arrived in the Congo before June 30, 1960. In 1972, the date was scaled back to January 1, 1950.⁴

2.4

It is two weeks ago (27 August, 2013) that the mortars shells hit the city, so the people of Goma, fed up with UN passivity, organized to rally against them. I was not in the territory yet, so I missed the events first hand. Instead, I hear about them through Aden, a UN employee. He claims that as thousands marched the main road to the airport, his vehicles were pelted with stones and one set on fire. Leaving the vehicles was not an option, the protective space being their only safety. In fact, two Congolese did die in the protests. In attempts to pacify the crowd, UN fired rubber bullets, while the Police fired live rounds.

M23, the predominately Tutsi rebel group, was responsible for the shelling of residential Goma. Once again, the Rwandan-sponsored war-machine was threatening to take the capital of

North Kivu province. They last took the city on the 19th of November 2012; this time from not twenty kilometers out. The hydra-headed beast of the Congo-Wars-cum-Kivu-Conflict last took the city in 2012, displacing thousands. For years, in response to war and the threat of war, there have been two armies in the city, the UN and the Congolese. The UN, under the local title MONUC (United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo) — later changed to MONUSCO in 2010 (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) — originally existed in order to maintain peace, but was helpless to enforce it. The current situation having been framed by the UN not as ‘war’ but as a ‘post conflict’ peace (disturbed by spoilers) furthered policies of non-intervention. Meanwhile, the Congolese national army — as acting sovereign — had always held, at best, a tenuous grasp of the fringe territory from its far-flung reaches of Kinshasa. On 28 March 2013, a three thousand strong Tanzanian /South-African / Malawian subgroup of the MONUSCO mission was given orders by the United Nations chapter VII mandate to take an active role in bringing stability to the region. This was the second time in the Congo (after the first mandate on 24 February 2000) that the order was given by the security council, to not simply protect civilians and promote peaceful diplomacy, but search for, and engage rebel entities. With or without the Congolese army present, the UN could attack those that threatened peace in the area.

It is the fact that M23 was still at the gates that angered the Congolese of Goma.

2.5



I arrived in Goma from Kinshasa at midday. Despite the ongoing war there is nothing remarkable about the airport. Outside, the near-atrophied carcass of a DC-3 (it overshot the runway in 2008) is comical, more from its witness of the destructiveness of ineptitude than violence. The yellow vaccine lady tasked with checking to see if you are bringing yellow fever into the country stole my vaccination card and then claimed it was lost. She would find it for me if I gave her incentive to do so. I did not think it was necessary to find something whose whereabouts was already known, so I declined to pay the search party. The silliness was mutually mocked, so with some affection it was given back. Then they lost my bag. This was mostly unfortunate; my seatmate, a soft-spoken Congolese man named Joseph, a local to Goma, and professor at the university, had insisted on finding me accommodation. Making him wait on the other side of the airport doors felt ungrateful. My bag, and those of a smattering of others, showed up a half hour later. Nothing had gone missing.

Once I got out of the building, I found him still waiting for me with his son and wife, and their large SUV. When I mentioned my plan — pitching my tent in the front lawn of the cheapest hotel in town for 4 USD a night — he was shocked, and visibly appalled. They didn't personally know of any hotels, so they contacted several people to find a suitable establishment. I had no idea what

seemed reasonable to them, but this did not matter: it was decided that I should stay at the Hotel Versaille. In the end we are only in the car for a minute because the hotel is right off of the main road to the airport. It was safe and clean, they insisted. My personal preference, unanimously denounced, was unsuitably contaminated with prostitutes and unfavorites. My claims that I did not mind, given the price was reasonable was more confounding. There is a general and immutable idea western people are all wealthy. Any claims otherwise are simply ignored. Understandably. However, I was not too fond of spending money for appearance sake.

2.6

Much like a motel, the hotel Versaille has two levels of rooms. The sunken level where I have a room, among ten identical others, is 15 USD a day. It is a white room (that rains dirt from the ceiling) about as small as the things contained in it would allow: a sink, toilet and cold shower, a desk and a bed. There is a plastic chair out front. It has water rarely, and electricity even more rarely. Upstairs, the expensive rooms have a large front glass entrance but what more, I'm not too sure. There is no-one downstairs, except me, and only one occupant upstairs, having rather loud, and publicly-visible sex. The professor bartered the price for me. And once he and his family left, I was taken on a tour of the compound. For hotel patron security, the front gate is an oversized steel wall, which leaves the porter in dread of opening it. Cars regularly honk for five minutes (assuring the doorman's interest) before he decides it is worth investigating. A room not six feet square serves as the front office. A thatched-roof restaurant is tucked away on one side

of the front parking lot. In the middle, a green lawn is decorated with a smattering of chairs and tables. An open-air bar is located at the other end. Fairly early on, the cook of the restaurant decided he wanted to be my friend, and so did the cleaner, the barman, the doorkeeper, and the office attendant. It struck me that there were a lot of staff for very few patrons.

Later I learn that the hotel is a favorite haunt of the Congolese military in the region. They all ride forest green Toyota pick-up trucks, retrofitted so the box has two facing benches where 8 or so soldiers sit with legs dangling out. A central turret-mounted heavy machine gun stands positioned right behind the rear glass. When they come by the truckload, these soldiers park their vehicles in the front lawn and the men pile out for their R and R. These Congolese soldiers are a particularly unfortunate set of neighbors to enjoy a nighttime drink with; they come in bands of fifteen to twenty, drink excessively, and carry extremely big guns.

2.7

This afternoon, over lunch, I sat with Aden for three hours. I had a large local beer every hour, chicken curry and four samosas. Aden had seven or eight beers, and chain-smoked. Aden is a kindly man who prefers no company to idle chatter, and seems to have replaced solid food with alcohol and cigarettes. He is an ex-German sergeant who did two tours of Afghanistan and now works with the UN. Of the many topics covered over lunch, one was prostitution; Aden explained, within the UN, the practice was more prevalent than reasonable expectation might reckon. Be careful, he suggested, these Congolese women are crafty. He

had arranged a fee with one prostitute, say, 20 USD. Afterwards, to his great indignation, the same lady demanded twice or triple the price. The ploy? If he didn't meet this new fee, she would go to the police, followed by his UN commanders, and claim that she was raped. An amazing reversal of power, I tell him. He continues his warning; a few months ago a prostitute claimed she was pregnant. Aden faced this accusation with the responsibility appropriate to its gravity. Despite being petrified, he was ready to take action. So (not trusting anyone else) he took her to see the UN doctor. Behind the doctor's closed doors, with stained face she pleaded with him to fake the test; she needed the money more than him. Aden's friend, who had a similar experience, was told that his prostitute had attempted to switch the urine samples. For Aden, 400USD was the paternal child-support cost quoted by the prostitute.

It goes to figure; there is never an invasion without a counter-invasion.

Since the M23 rebels were repulsed from the outskirts of Goma last month by the UN expeditionary force MONUSCO, the city appears normal. The mortars that hit the city are not visible, and I can see no physical traces of war. Not 2013, 2008, 2004, 2001, 1998, 1996, or 1995 and so on. I am told the UN curfew has been rolled back from nine pm to ten pm. NGO's have a similar easing of preventive measures.



LA DANSE MACABRE

KING LEOPOLD II : "STOP! STOP! I AM TIRED

DEATH : "I STARTED AT YOUR BIDDING, I STOP WHEN I CHOOSE"

[Fig. 2.4]

2.8

The first instance of anti-foreigner violence in post-independent Kivus would erupt in 1963, centering around the Masisi territory. For three years the “Kanyarwanda war” consisted of a large-scale massacre of Hutu and Tutsi by an alliance of local elements, the Hunde and the Nande. Its point of departure was the creation of the tripartite Kivu province (Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, and Maniema). Of central concern, Hunde tribes feared the appropriation of political institutions by the Banyarwanda. In order to justify the violence, the rhetorical tool of legitimized exclusion was developed. By casting the Banyarwanda as outsiders, the ‘indigenous’ tribes sought to revoke their right to exist in the Congo. According to René Lemarchand in his book *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa*

One of the first moves of the Hunde insurgents, according to one observer, was to reduce to ashes the local administrative archives so as to prevent the identification of the Banyarwanda otherwise than as refugees or foreigners.¹

In 1977 Mobutu expelled Bisengimana under still-unknown circumstances, causing the political *big-man* network of the Banyarwanda to collapse. The inability to pressure the central government ushered in an era of anti-foreign rhetoric and ultimately, violence. Bisengimana’s laws were repealed. By 1981, the legislative council retrograded the date for nationality to October 19, 1908. Not only did this threaten ‘recent’ migrants (those of the MIB, and the so called 59’ers) it created a pretense for wider exclusion, particularly towards the Congolese Tutsi known as the Banyamulenge. By pushing the burden of proof beyond the means of the minorities, the new law would have provided state-sanctioned backing for indiscriminate persecution. Despite the fact that the *de jure* implementation of the law was never achieved, anti-‘foreigner’ propaganda proliferated in the post-Bisengimana era.

The vulnerability of the Banyarwanda was exacerbated by the

collapse of Congolese economy in the early 1990's. With resource scarcity and unemployment in Masisi, violence against 'foreigners' (Hutu and Tutsi) would see some 10,000 dead and 250,000 displaced.²

In the wake of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, the vast waves of migrants from Rwanda would reconfigure the ethnic landscape in the Kivu's. The addition of this third wave of migrants, from Rwanda, would be especially detrimental to the Banyamulenge. Fleeing political persecution in Rwanda, the Hutu organizers of the Rwandan genocide, (along with innocent Hutu), fled by the millions to refugee camps along the Congo-Rwanda border. The simplistic Hutu-Tutsi divide, so prevalent to post-genocide discourse, did not exist in the Congo prior to the 1994 genocide. With the influx of militant Hutu, the tribal landscape moved away from a Hutu/Tutsi alliance against 'indigenous' elements, to a singling out of the Tutsi against the newly reconfigured Bantu 'indigenous' elements. The propaganda specifically targeted the Banyamulenge as a foreign menace, "...a Rwandan whose morphology and ideology is identical to that of Paul Kagame..."³ The law of April 28, 1995 demanded the repatriation of "All Rwanda and Burundi refugees and immigrants, without condition and without delay, including the Banyamulenge, henceforth categorized as foreigners".⁴

2.9

I asked the professor's wife about visiting refugee camps in the region. She advised that French wasn't nearly as prevalent as it was in urban areas. In a sort of atavism, it is interesting how the colonial regime took hold of the country and stamped onto it a colonial infrastructure, culture and identity, but could only really smear its thin layer so far, not unlike the now eroded asphalt roads bandaged to the earth. It is interesting then that, like development, the colonial language also fissured and eroded, remaining intact only where concentrations of power were once dominant. Though French is widely spoken and officially the national language, local languages take primacy. This is especially apparent in the east, where Swahili links the DRC to its eastern trading partners Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, and otherwise — the African Union. Lingala is spoken in the west by the government and the military, Kikongo in the south-west, Tshiluba in the center.

I left my hotel at 6 in the morning and headed to the central roundabout where the army of phone sellers congregate. Goma is a late riser. A dismal showing of street sellers are setting up stands, and a few old ladies – bent at the hip – are ineffectually sweeping the dust off the road with home made brooms. I hired a motor-taxi to take me to a refugee camp outside of the city. We followed one of two paved roads out of town, passed the roundabout with the grand statue, passed the new gas stations. My good-fortune soon ran out; within a few kilometers we were back on the lava-encrusted dirt road. Everyone is on this road, the wooden push-bike kids, overburdened bicycles, motorcycles, SUVs, and troop transport UN trucks. For such a lively road, it is in amazingly decrepit state. Which means, as we whiz along, we are never more than a meter in any direction from smashing into someone or something. This would seem altogether unimportant if our path of travel was straight. In fact, it was neither horizontally nor vertically consistent. That my driver perpetually insisted on leaping out onto



the oncoming lane to play chicken was no less worrisome than the simple fact every pot-hole promised to eject me from the back of the motorcycle. This was at first avoided by giving my driver a firm bear-hug and holding on for dear life. That is, until I realized that this overly friendly seatbelt method was not widely adopted, and that the much more dignified (albeit far less reassuring) way, was to hold on to the grab bars either side of the seat. Needless to say, the risk of ejection was only minimally diminished by this option. It was about an hour's ride on the back of this wretched machine to the base of the camp.

Past the city, the landscape opened up with green fields under squat mountains. We passed a school hoisting the red, yellow and sky-blue flag of the modern DRC. A gaggle of school children were corralled into order out front. Simultaneously, all traffic came to a stop. Like soldiers standing at attention, for only this brief moment, everyone stood still to pledge fealty to the flag. Most of the way down the green valleys the dirt was red. I was left at the side of the road. I had expected a refugee camp to be a striking, dramatic scene of chaos and depravity. In fact it is hidden, and absorbed into its surroundings. Assuming the driver had understood where I meant to go in the first place, I followed the side road up a hill. The road was quite wide, a service road for the camp. Either side of the road had numerous utilitarian stand-alone shelters some twenty feet wide by ten feet deep. There are several of these industrial storage units standing half constructed or empty. The ones that are open have their contents exploding out onto the streets. It comes to me that the robustness of the storage units is what feels out of place, closer to bunkers than shacks. As everywhere, people were selling t-shirts, hats, proto-pharmacy supplies, fufu, anything. I spoke my few Swahili words to a boy and his father, as we both walked up the gravel hill, a network of vein-like paths shot out into the forest. Over the top of the hill was

the refugee camp, a vast army-style array of UNHCR tarps and huts, all the same size, all hovels. Makeshift trenches had been built around them for drainage. The eastern half was all community buildings; schools, offices, congregation halls, etc... The western half was all the semi-permanent living huts you see on TV.

Days later, I retraced my steps and found myself back at the refugee camp. Only this time instead of going relatively unnoticed, some man started yelling, and people milling about flocked to the ruckus. Arriving at the conclusion that it was I at the center of this commotion, I went over to the man. He didn't say much, only directing me to an office where a group of four were congregating. Who was I? How did I get here? Again, who was I with? It seemed to make little sense to them that I wasn't 'with' anyone, but that didn't seem to matter relative to the larger point you cannot visit a refugee camp without a permit. So I was shown the door with a rifle. How, or where, I acquire said permit was beyond me. I returned home a second time, no closer to understanding.

2.10



After the collapse of the Gizenga government in 1962, disaffection in the east continued with the 1964 Maoist 'Simba' rebellion.

Though short lived, its resultant re-alignment of power in the Kivu's would have a lasting impact on ethnic tensions. The Tutsi 59'ers supported the rebellion. So too, the Tutsi of South Kivu (the Banyamulenge). Unlike the 59'ers, the Banyamulenge immigrated to the Kivus long before colonial rule, and broke ties with Rwanda in the process, sharing neither language nor cultural identity with their Rwandan kin.¹ Disaffection amongst the Banyamulenge over the slaughter of their cattle led to the reversal of their allegiance, until ultimately, after attacks by Kabila's rebels, hundreds joined the ranks of the Congolese Army (FAZ). As a result of their patronage, and more likely as a way to draw support away from larger ethnic groups in the Kivus, the minority Banyamulenge were given political power for the first time.

Many were rewarded with lucrative positions in the provincial capital, and more and more of their children flocked to missionary schools. From a primarily rural, isolated, backward community, the Banyamulenge would soon become increasingly aware of themselves as a political force.²

As the link with Kinshasa increased, relations with their Bembe neighbours became increasingly inimical. By associating the Banyamulenge with the subsequent waves of Rwandans (particularly the Tutsis in 1959), 'ethnic' tribes and local government alike sought to deny the Banyamulenge the right to claim Congolese citizenship. "Candidates suspected of 'foreign' origins were systematically prevented from running during the 1982 and 1987 elections on the grounds of 'dubious nationality'"³. During the push for democracy in the early 90's, the Banyarwanda (including the Banyamulenge) had hoped to establish political legitimacy by fielding candidates during the National Conference. All candidates were barred from attending.⁴

2.11

The ‘chalet’, real name or not, is a mini resort-style bar on the coast of the lake. It has expensive drinks and foreign foods, like pizza and steak. Once a week it tries to pull in the *mzungu* population with cheaper drinks. This is where I found myself Wednesday night. Mostly, the chalet consists of a crisp green lawn that, at its far end, falls into the lake. It is sufficiently out of place here in Goma that no one really walks on it. The man who gives parking directions for bad drivers, the barman and the waitresses are Congolese; nearly everyone else is western. The *mzungus* are split: those at leisure on the restaurant’s patio and those cramming shoulders at the bar. I met my Ukrainian UN friend again. He promised to take me up in his helicopters, though his level of inebriation dampened any excitement about this idea. My effort to introduce myself to others largely fell flat. One particular encounter with a group of expats got subverted rather quickly. With the standard cultural signifiers asked: Where are you from? What are you doing here? What do you do? I made a perfunctory remark largely meant as humor about the long hours with little reward aspiring architects might look forward to. The response I got by an unknown NGO lady was: “don’t talk to me about hardship, you don’t know anything about hard work, I have the hardest work on the planet, I prevent genocide!” Even as a superficial, pat-yourself-on-the-back comment, I wonder what sort of currency this remark carries in the wider culture. Perhaps, “I, and the system I am with, is in fact critical to preventing the savagery that would invariably take place if I was not here; We the enlightened torchbearers blessedly bestow onto the heathens this lamp of reason against their nature.” It flatly lacks wider perspective. And what exactly, I was tempted to ask, was her and her wider civilizing mission’s role in starting this genocide? I did not ask of course; it’s hard to make new friends with incendiary remarks.

2.12

Act Two. I'm slightly nervous from being chased, but feel largely indifferent. It is eerie when a solitary fuel truck motors passes with its two confused Egyptian UN soldiers blankly staring back at me. The night space reminds me of those seaboard towers keeping watch over forlorn fishermen, these streetlights especially useless in the emptiness of night. A bit further I come on another scene. At some distance I can see that a big man is roughing it out with another person - seemingly a smaller man - but I can't make out the details. I reason: they are just two drunks leaving the bar, which doesn't bother me any. They are in the way of my running route, so I don't turn back. A half-streets distance further it becomes too late, I feel my nonchalance is precisely and completely wrong. If at first I was curious, now I am dead afraid. This is no bar fight, but something much more severe between the large man and a woman. She looks completely panic-stricken. She fights back hard, filling the blanket silence with her yell. I have never seen panic so immediate. When I was far enough away, they were on the sidewalks beside the buildings to the right, now near, they are in the middle of the road. They are not moving anywhere, but not for lack of strain. She is caught, beaten, crying, yelling, and panicked. For the love of mercy, I wonder. What options do you really have? What right do I have to be here? Within seconds I had come to face them directly. We are now three, in the middle of the street, alone. She is half-naked; her clothes have been ripped off in the struggle. Accepting that it spells disaster for me personally, I resolve to insert myself as best I can. I take my headphones out, and yell to them, "Allez, Allez" loud as I can. "Vas te faire foutre, espece de salope." (Go away, Fuck you, you son of a bitch). Nothing. Absolutely nothing. I'm sort of dumbfounded. I get closer and yell more, expecting him to turn around and fight. But nothing again. I am standing right in front of them and the violence is completely out of reach.

2.13

I visited the office of an international NGO, and talked to Ibrahim, who I supposed was the office manager. I had hoped to talk to someone about the situation in Goma with M23 and the various reports that have come out over the years from their office, but that was not possible. With my lowly clout-less status, I was directed to write down my questions for their public relations personnel. Outside the meeting room, a number of computers were manned by five or six local men. I can understand the bureaucratic machine operating within such a large NGO, however I was disappointed that my questions were never answered. When I phoned back there was no recollection of my visit. In other words, fuck off.

I do wonder then about the nature of these NGO's. In the end, they are always accountable to the higher command, which invariably exists outside the country. The head (or senior researcher) in this case, is an external person. Abstractly, these western institutions join civil society under the veil of apolitical intervention, yet maintain and regulate, to a large extent, the lives within their catchment. The apolitical nature further justifies arms-length involvement, no real desire to transfer their power to the civil society itself. In other words, the tools of research, development and protest are kept in their domain. You don't ever see an African 'promoted' to one of these NGO's. I'm not sure I've seen a single African within any of the NGO camps.

2.14

When the Rwandan army (the Rwandan Patriotic Front, [RPF]) attacked the Hutu refugee camps in 1996 - to neutralize the growing power of the genocidal militia (the ex-Rwandan Army

Force [FAR], and the interhamwe) - they naturally found an ally in the marginalized Banyamulenge. As seen elsewhere in the great lakes, the fomentation of exclusionary policies sowed the seeds for future violence.

As the movement grew across North and South Kivu, encompassing widespread anger against Mobutu, the Rwandan army seized the opportunity to neutralize, not just its eastern border, but also the entire country. For its local figurehead the RPF (under pressure from the Ugandans) called on Laurent Kabila to form what would be known as the AFDL (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo).¹ Under Rwanda's occupation of the Kivus, it would be the 'indigenous' tribes that would be subject to discrimination.

Denied all possibility of political participation, economically exploited by Rwandan interlopers, and trampled underfoot by foreign occupying forces, their most salient common characteristic is their visceral hatred of all Tutsi, whether of Rwandan or Congolese origins.²

With Kabila's protracted ascension to power 30 years after his initial rebellion, his strength as leader of the Congo rested completely with the Rwandan force. In the tide of increasingly anti-Tutsi sentiment, by 1998 Kabila took the fateful decision to expel his king-makers. In order to move his legitimacy beyond the clutches of Kigali, he banished his Rwanda advisors, and declared that all foreign troops leave the Congo. As Banyamulenge and Tutsi troops moved out of Kinshasa, hundreds of Tutsi, and Tutsi looking Africans were murdered by the army and angry Congolese mobs. Against the Rwandans, the Tutsi 'enemy', (encompassed by the specific term Banyamulenge), Kabila turned towards his former enemy, the Hutu refugees, and armed them.

Once again, the marginalized Banyamulenge would be caught in the middle. As Rwanda prepared a reinvasion of the Congo,

under their new proxy, the RCD (Rally for Congolese Democracy), the Banyamulenge would become increasingly distrustful and divided about their Rwandan protectors. Despite this, the greater need for security against their total annihilation meant they had little choice but to accept their position as Rwandan pawn. As the Second Congo War devolved into the criminal exploitation of resources, the original RCD promise to the Banyamulenge (to be a vehicle for the defense of their interests), inverted, and the instrumentalized Banyamulenge would exist to serve Rwandan interests.

Few people have been dealt a harsher blow by history: many argue, with justice, that they have been twice victimized; first by Kagame, who used them as cannon fodder for the defense of Rwanda's strategic interests; and then by Congolese extremists, as happened in Bukavu in June 2004 when in the wake of an abortive Banyamulenge-led coup, hundreds perished. Today Bukavu is virtually "free" of Banyamulenge.³

2.15

There are a few main differences between Goma and Kinshasa, stemming from the difference in its foreign occupancy. If Kinshasa is a business and managerial hub, Goma is a humanitarian NGO-polis. Photography is permitted and I can use much smaller denominations USD. However, still no singles.

I am really quite confused about who built these NGO compounds. They are immense buildings, and numerous. Either they are constructed from NGO financing, or, they are rented from the Congolese. I have no way of knowing which it is, but I can not help but think that if it is the latter, it is dirty money.

The only people I know who own property here are wealthy elites, often tied to mining, and a tie to mining is a tie to violence. But this is just speculation. Rent in these rich district is expensive. For a house within a walled compound, which, is most of downtown, it is pointless to think the anyone but the local business elite or a *mzungu* could afford it. Since the arrival of the humanitarian industry over two decades ago, the population of Goma has nearly quadrupled. With each wave of disaster, the local complexion of Goma changes. So to has the humanitarian community, swelling to compete for the demand. From ethnic violence in '93, refugees in '94, war in '96, '98, '02, a volcano in '02 and a continuation of violence since '07, there are at the moment close to a hundred NGO's in Goma. There is something odd about all these walls and trucks. It is hard not to look sideways at this friendly caste. My language, my education, my manners, and my power all separate me. Clearly there is risk, and clearly bureaucracies have exacting standards, but it seems at least possible that these are used more as an arms-length excuse to sublimate fear into necessity.

Across from the Hotel Versaille there is another hotel. Although, I am not sure it is really a hotel in the sense customers pay to stay overnight. Most every night it blares the same five Congolese top-of-the-pops hits 'till nearly two in the morning. I am not bothered by it now, but at the beginning of my stay it was annoying. One night, unable to sleep, I walked out the front gate and crossed the mere four meters to the other hotel. This is the second club I have been too, and it is an entirely local affair. Coco Jambo, the other club I have been to, is on the main paved drag, and is exactly the opposite. Every Friday/Saturday night it has a line of beached white SUV's outside its walls, with the huge tacky sign telling you exactly where you are. Inside Coco Jambo is a parody of itself (much like my hotel, though to much different effect). It dresses

itself up as an idyllic beach resort with thatched huts and delicious bruschettes (meat on a stick). The music, like the clientele is west-pat. The so-far-nameless club across the street is a dirt shack much less contained in every respect. Crowds spill over out front, Chinese-import bikes swarm, music blares, sellers mix with party-goers. I smiled and laughed with some people. It is loud and the Congolese dance with pleasure. If my presence in Coco Jambo is completely inconspicuous, here I am completely unwelcome. It is made clear enough that my presence is spoiling the fun.

2.16



I walked around town today, up towards the airport, the rebels, and the poor. Commercial buildings along the main roads are an exhibition of color: sky blue for Primus beer or blood red for Coke. The colors are naturally exuberant in tone, their vitality nearly depleted now, under a layer of sediment. Most of these buildings look like they were painted long ago, with only a smattering of upkeep. As a general rule, the rich buildings made of modern materials, blue glass and tile, prefer the more official-looking air of neutral colors. The poor leave their building materials raw, an accumulation of unworked matter. It has rained again, so the rutted

strings of dirt tracks are small pools and swamps of refuse. This neighborhood is called Birere. It is home to some of the poorest in Goma, split by the airport road. To the west, the ordered grid of car-carrying roads ties itself into the wider colonial infrastructure of roundabouts, paved avenues, and symphonic radial streets. On the opposite side there is a crush of houses that make the buffer zone between the formal city and the conjoined town of Gisenyi, Rwanda. Like bursting plumbing, the organization of the shanty-town is a display of anarchic popular construction. The proliferation of tin and wood shacks is evidence of a vast sea of people crashing against the territorial sea-wall. Like any frontier condition, not simply a boundary condition, weak government control is exploited for opportunities in trade, regulation, tax, or law paralleling state structures. In other words, whether talking about cassiterite or papaya, illicit and illegal networks of non-state actors working trans-state means subverts the colonial order.

In this district, there is a complete collapse of negative space; streets of a regular dimension and trajectory start to disappear into corridors only a person or two wide, and finally collapse into interior veins of hallways facing bedrooms. The spatial logic of distinct zones or public space, use, and property is codified in a way that is entirely antithetical to colonial grid. The customary layer of space is, on first glance, collapsed in a single plane. It is often unclear where the road ends and a person's house starts. I asked one man how long he had lived here and also how many people lived here. He didn't seem to speak much French. I found that not having a common language made my presence heavy. This was enough to persuade me not to speak much more or to endeavor much further. People are keenly interested in my existence as always, so I get a few hollered inquiries, though no real objections to my presence.

2.17

I met the same prostitute at the bar again today. This time I am sitting with Alain, a local customs officer at the airport. I talk with him often enough. A very kind man, insisting I join him for dinner at his house on Sunday. She was coming over to our party, asking us to buy her a drink. Aden (the German ex-soldier) despised her company, I declined to flirt, and Alain just ignored her. I still haven't figured out what the relationship between Rwandans and Congolese is fully like. Judging by this woman, the Rwandans are largely tolerated but not much liked in Goma.

Ethnicity and nationality are fiercely relevant terms to most people I meet, though few want to talk about them openly. Many people outwardly refer to themselves by the very general term, Bantu, possibly referring to the language of most of central and southern Africa (Kinyarwanda, Swahili, Lingala, etc.) or a people (as distinct from the Hamites, i.e. Tutsi). I don't generally ask what people mean when they say Bantu. It is impossible to know who is a Rwandan immigrant from any of the major migratory movements; either the genocide of 94', the pogroms of 60', the colonial labor programs of the 20' s-30's, or another.

The last six decades of intermittent war have seen every sympathy and antagonism cross every party's path. Despite this, there is a fierce national sentiment across the Congo. Despite the fact that Kivu province is functionally and geographically distant from Kinshasa, there is no obvious sign of anti-nationalism. In fact, like the traffic stopping during raising the flag at schools, most people believe in the unified state, choosing instead to vent their anger quite specifically on the UN or Kabila. Even the tyrant Mobutu is widely respected for his ability to keep the country in a unified, formal peace.

2.18



The other day, in frustration, I chopped off all my hair. My straight razor became too dull to continue, my beard was left untouched. So now people look at the *mzungu* and laugh. They say my head is upside down. So I tell them they don't know the half of it. I asked around what '*mzungu*' meant. Apart from its apparent connotation of a white man, or any foreigner for that matter, it translates from Swahili to mean basically a confused person. "someone who roams around aimlessly" or "aimless wanderer" being the direct translation given. Emphasis on futility.

Found myself at a UN party last night hosted by the Uruguayan contingent. I doubt a civilian is permitted in a UN military base but the guards didn't ask. My friends said I was UN and none of the soldiers and staff inside seemed to mind me being there. I spent most the night drinking with the Ukrainian regional safety commander. He's a young, clearly lonely guy. The rest of the company is mostly male and culturally homogenous. There do not seem to be any Indians, South African, or others present.

The grounds consist of an expectantly large array of weapons, barracks, offices, and vehicles. Unlike many of the other UN bases, the Uruguayans have their base near town, adjacent to the airport. It seems like the Indian base is also downtown. I have not seen it, but the South Africans are based to the north, near the rebels. In all, UN bases cover the lake, the airport, and the road into town.

2.19

I went to church yesterday with Seth and his family. It was unpleasant at best, and maddening at worst, the singing and music exempt. It was a six or seven hour affair, starting earlier in the morning than I would have liked. My friends drove up to the hotel in their large SUV. We left for church with five others crammed inside. We drove past the familiar market and into the rock district. Here the roads are so rough that the SUV bounces far more than it drives. It is so slow we might as well walk. Which would also make good spatial sense. The roads are incredibly narrow, sandwiched between waist-high stone walls. I feel a little ridiculous in such an expensive vehicle too, surrounded by these stone and wood shacks. Given their wealth, I am somewhat surprised that we are in the poorer area, the disparity done away with by denominational unity. We arrived late to the small white church, so all of us spread out around the concrete-floored room with white plastic chairs. The pulpit was only slightly raised from the floor, and the only thing ornate about the room. To its left was a picture of Jesus and to the right a picture of the American missionary, William Branham (of whom I had never heard; the fact proving scandalous). The minister was away, so a screen was rolled down and the recorded sermon projected on it. In French, not Swahili, the sermon started and continued with a patronizing diatribe against all Arabs. The disorder and deaths of the Arab Spring, the sermon proclaimed, was predicted in the bible. Further, the Palestinians entirely deserved their oppression. Again, because the bible granted the sons of Israel the rightful return to their land by any means necessary. At some point, a local man I knew stood up to talk. He was speaking to me despite looking at the room, "I know the west does not believe in these things, they think they are modern, but we here know that to be wrong, we know we are not backwards, we do not need any other proof of this, our truth is written in this bible". What he was referring to in specific was the

biblical abomination of gays destroying the sanctity of god's love. "Beware," they all shouted, "Sodom and Gomorrah will surely befall whichever community accepts this sin." Final hymns were sung in French, and Swahili, including the illustrious 'Onward Christian soldiers'.

We funneled out the back door of the church to the tune of the band, near-everyone smiling broadly. The congregation lined up so that everyone could take turns shaking hands. A gesture of solidarity, disorienting in its forced intimacy. I can only mutter a sincere appreciation for the hospitality and a half earnest *munghu akubariki* (*dieux vous bénisse*, God bless you). Afterwards we returned home for lunch. It was entirely prepared by the women, who did not eat with the men or at the same time as the men. It was a red stew of fish with fufu. I hate fufu, the mashed up brick of Cassava or plantain ubiquitous across Sub-Saharan Africa, but this is completely delicious.

Afterwards the professor introduced me to a businessman with considerable wealth and education. Of the many people I talked to - both national and expat - his history of the region was one of the few that seemed in line with what I thought was the truth. It seemed to me people have a different reasons for their understanding of the world around them. Some are swayed by propaganda. Others focus on the immediate needs of subsistence living.

Others yet are not terribly intellectually tied to the wider history or polity from lack of education or cultural amnesia. Of course, people talk as freely as they see fit, which says nothing of their understanding. It also seems that history ultimately has a fragile hold on rational understanding, invariably marshaled to operate in concert with the present.

After asking how I liked the sermon, likely sensing my unease, the businessman proceeded of his own volition to explain the

historic role of Christianity in Congo. Given I was sitting with the church congregation I was surprised to hear he saw the missionaries as an apparatus of the colonial state. This resonated with my assumption that the first missionaries planted the seed of compliance for the state, followed by, and then allowed, the state to brandish its rod of correction. Or was it the *chicotte*.

A conversation I found fairly typical, expat and local alike, followed: “the black man laughs when the Chinese man expresses his surprise at black intelligence. ‘How can it be, they ask, that the most powerful (and therefore smartest) man on the planet is in fact black, i.e. Mr. Obama.’ And then in the same frame turns around to proclaim proudly, ‘Thank god for the black man’s good sense of morality, which the godless Chinese do not possess.’ The atheist Ban-Ki Moon’s helm of the UN notwithstanding, I think to myself. Damn one group for their ignorance, then go on to damn another group’s inferiority, that’s the way the world goes round.

2.20



Again I got up early, and headed towards the familiar phone market in the central roundabout. What I wanted was a tour of

the city. When I asked the moto-taxis to help me out with this, they looked back with confusion. ‘But where do you want to go?’ Funny, I think, “*n’importe*, anywhere, everywhere, this is your city, *fait-moi un tour*.” We bargain a price for an hour’s service, which comes to 1 USD. My driver Immanuel is a little quiet at first, taking me to places I had already walked, but I do my best to break through this formality. Talking, however, is not so easy on the back of a motorcycle. I’m interested in what Immanuel might see as valuable to a tourist, in a town with not more than a dozen tourists a year. It is a mix of popular things like the stadium, rich things like the waterfront mansions and palatial hotels, and beautiful things. We first go up the paved road I’m well familiar with, then onto dirt roads that take us to the large market, and then the cathedral destroyed by the volcano in 2002. We then take a turn into the moonscape.

The lava from the 2002 volcano eruption destroyed large chunks of the city. What the lava destroyed has now been re-appropriated, with workers constantly chipping away at the deposits to make stone bricks. And so where Goma is not red and brown, it is grey with rock. The road however is left as sediment. Looping back, we take the road out of town to Uvira, past the huge shell of a building containing the university. It’s flush with kids, though the building itself has no windows. We descend further, to the lake where we pass one of the harbor ports. The fishermen in their traditional wooden catamarans contrast well against the legion of moto-taxi drivers washing themselves and their bikes in the lake. Immanuel is coming to revel in the fact that he has a tourist interested in his city. He wants me to take a picture of nearly everything. Here, at the motorcycles, I’m really not keen on this idea, though he continues to insist. Without fail, as soon as I take my camera out, one man shouts and the whole chorus of taxi-men follows, with a veritable mutiny forming rapidly. Immanuel assuages the group in



Swahili for a time, but then realizes it is simply more prudent to leave, and quickly. We continue home along the water. The water is where the rich live. The UN has a massive base here. There's a new building the size of a football field going up. And the NGOs too own property here, all directly on or are near the water. When we are back at the phone market, I am exhausted.

2.21

At the UN, Aden looks after the forces' non-military vehicles. Much of his day involves testing drivers and administering licenses. For UN staff to drive the big white SUV's, they are required to have an UN-issued or approved license. That is, in addition to their national license. One might expect this process to be a mere formality, given the existing evidence of proficiency, but no, as a carrier of diplomatic neutrality, the UN rightfully makes concerted efforts to minimize destructive action in its area of influence. One commonly heard rumor says an accident — not just caused by, but simply involving the UN — is so damaging to their image, that the UN covers all costs related to the accident. The more far-fetched rumors say local actors deliberately hit UN vehicles, expressly to collect on these damages.

It may be wise not to take these stories too seriously.

In any case, the real problem starts when it is clear, during testing, some do not know how to drive. Despite the fact they own a license. (I do not make a generalization here, nor comment on the frequency of this inadequacy; I note merely that it exists.) The problem is explained in this way. Many of the UN civilians and volunteers come from the global south, where access to private

vehicles, for the majority, remains out of reach. Coming from this poverty, they are attracted to the different UN missions for the financial security. Aden (a working-class German) does not care much for his job, but others greatly value theirs. When they arrive, they are required to do their work with a vehicle. This is compounded by the fact that any and all movement in the city must be by vehicle. They come to Aden and fail the driving test, sometimes not knowing where to put the key. They are allowed to return once, within a short period, for re-examination, but this is little consolation, given the depth of inability. It is with some sadness that he recounted one particular lady, who, having failed the test, started to cry and plead with him to pass her regardless. Failing the test is synonymous with an inability to work. She would be sent home. In his usual way, Aden just shook his head, smothered his cigarette and said, sorry, that is not my problem.

2.22

Joseph, (the *chef de travaux a L'institut Superieur des Techniques Appliquees*, the head of research at the higher institute for applied technology) and Damas, (the *Secrétaire Général Administratif de l'Institut du Bâtiment et des Travaux Public de Rutshuru*, Administrative Secretary General of the Institute of Building and Public Works at Rutshuru) came to visit me at my hotel. We sat in the courtyard with some sodas. I hadn't known the purpose of their visit. The family tends to stop by, unannounced, to see how I'm making out. Today we talk about the importance of knowledge, and consequently the west's monopoly on this resource. What is decided is that economic development and aid are irrelevant if knowledge assets are not exchanged in the process.

2.23



Where I can I have made a concerted effort to learn Swahili. Unfortunately it is an obstinately difficult language to remember. Where my memory falters, my sketchbook is full of expressions that I turn to when necessary. Thankfully, my very broken “*Habari Gani? Mzuri Sana*” (*Comment-allez vous, Tres Bien* / How are you? Grand) are never shunned and mostly embraced. Even better are the ridiculous pronouncements. For example, when weaseling out of conversations about money, asking “*unalewa?*” (*est-vous burre?* Are your drunk?) is a well received joke. “*hacuna sheda*”, (*il n’y a aucun problème*, no problems) or *Mtu huyu atalipia kila kitu*, (this person will pay for everything) has been great to break down formality. The Congolese are not shy talking about sex either.

Today I met with a prostitute at my hotel. I should have known she was a prostitute from the fact that she was dressed remarkably provocatively and was strikingly beautiful, but I didn’t at first. The office manager, Etienne, and I were sitting out front of the office chatting when she came in, spoke to him in Swahili (I assumed) then spoke to me in English. I did not understand how she knew I was English, or why she chose to speak to me in English. It was raining, and she said she was looking for her friend. I said I’d been here for an hour or so but hadn’t seen her. She just sort of looked at me blankly. Etienne just sort of watched and shrugged. I asked

her where she was from, she said Rwanda, she'd come over for the day. Ok, now it made sense.

2.24

Act Three. *It is a startling picture. In the middle of a street there is a scrawny shirtless mzungu, a halfnaked and pulverized woman, and a large black man in a wife-beater. He is too absorbed by his prey or his anger to notice me; she is blind, clearly seeing nothing. And me, I am present. Now what? Another older woman has come out from the building and tries to intervene too, though, from a distance. Passive intervention is achieving nothing, so I press my nerves to forcefully intervene. Looking around to see if this is really the only option — which frankly seems horrendously fatalistic — I notice that there are 3 men leisurely observing the events from a balcony. In a fury I yell to them. What are you doing? How can you just stand there? why are you not helping this woman? They yell back with disgusting nonchalance, “non. non. Il est militaire.... Stop. He is military”. Panic comes over me. I am in his face, but I had not hit him, and thank god. Any hope I wouldn't get hurt had already been lost, I can accept that to a degree. But the military and the police are a different affair. At best I would be pulverized, and in jail. At worst dead. Dumbfounded, I run past them as fast as I can, hoping, without looking, he or any of the other military weren't interested in my useless effort. I leave with the sound of her head cracking into a wall, the ultimate goal clearly to trap her in the building to be raped. I have no idea who she was, I just run deeper into the pitch black side streets.*

It occurs to me that I really was invisible. As a white man, connected for all they know to the UN, I have some perverse immunity in a culture of impunity. If its true that I do, it is equally true that the woman does not.

2.25

In a small shack no bigger than two and a half widths of hanging clothes, I was bartering with a lady for 2 shirts for about 20 USD. We couldn't agree on a price (which I knew was high). Seeing as I had nowhere near the money she wanted, I moved to leave the store. The rather dour seller made no protest, but another man about my age did. He had heard the conversation, and told me he would pay the 5 USD I was short. I hesitated as much as I could, but then relented and thanked the man for his generosity. This simple role reversal was astounding. He explained that the seller was his cousin and that he didn't mind helping me out. He asked me what I was doing, and when I mentioned that I was a student of architecture and here to observe life, he looked puzzled and asked for further elaboration. I explained, now routine, my story. He beamed at the functional idea of a tourist. He insisted we take a tour in his SUV to show off the town he took such great pride in. His name is Patrick. He founded and runs a local NGO in the Masisi area to help children affected by the war. His is the only local NGO I contact in Goma (not that there aren't many others, they just aren't visible in the city). Simply because rent is too high downtown. The first thing we do is leave the rich quarters.

The whole western part of Goma is untouched by *mzungus*. His high school is picturesque; a green field covers the grounds underneath elevated buildings. It is secluded and well maintained. He sees his old teacher and reminisces. The university, where his girlfriend is studying, is also set in a field, although this time it is dirt. Both schools are gender-segregated. We drive down another road to a shack that looks like many other shacks. Several men have gathered inside. It always amazes me how decrepit the outside of these properties can appear, while inside the care is clearly evident. The irregularity that exists in the built form tricks the eye into thinking it is seeing disrepair. These men are all young, and generally they lounge about. They are members of a

church gathered here to prepare religious literature for university orientation starting next week. It is, across Africa I have learned, a generally bad idea to say you are without God and his company. Interestingly, it largely does not matter which god. God itself is synonymous with moral direction. The topic of religion is largely inescapable; a thick smear of religious poultice covers everything and everyone. Being a good agnostic I had earlier claimed only half sympathies with Christianity. Patrick knew full well this required further proselytization. The leader of the group, an older man, made sure to take me outside and read me their brochure about the basic tenants of Christianity and Christ's love. I did not care to raise any nuanced objections to the simple and dogmatic form of Christianity foisted on me. I listened, and agreed where appropriate.

2.26



With some degree of vindictory pride, an NGO worker told to me this story.

A friend of his, a fellow mzungu NGO, was at the central fruit market buying a bushel of bananas. The market is not nearly as busy as the larger market uptown, and has a Mzungu tourist shop at its eastern end. Given its central location, near the rich district,

this is not surprising. It is also falling apart: the wood structure and tin cladding is patched where necessary. But, back to the story. This *mzungu* NGO brought the bananas to the Congolese seller and tried to give his money. The Congolese lady told him she would not accept it. She wanted more. The Mzungu refused to pay anything more than the ‘real’ price, the price he had many times before, and was indignant he would have to pay more than its ‘worth’. But still she demanded more. If the bananas were some inconsequentially few Congolese francs in value (including the now imposed ‘tourist tax’), the man’s reaction was to pull out from his wallet a crisp ten USD bill. No, it was not for the sake of getting more change. With a lighter from his pocket, he held the bill up like a strange form of sacrifice, and burnt it. This act of sabotage roused the entire market. So he did it again.

2.27



Mostly, my presence in Goma confounds people I meet. If they are foreigners, they ask what organization I am with. If they are locals, they ask what agenda I hold. If I say I am an architecture student, they laugh. The fact is, I had a return ticket out of Kinshasa but found the capital cost-prohibitive, so I decided to come here instead. I have no idea what I am doing here. I say I am writing an

architecture thesis, so they say, on what? Its simpler I figure, and more precise to just say, I am taking it all in.

Apart from what I am doing here, many westerners seem to wonder how I got here. I've learned now, the acceptable route to Goma is not through Kinshasa but through Kigali, Rwanda. Or conversely if you are UN, to take a UN designated plane from Kinshasa. The uninterrupted deterioration of the road networks from the colonial era has made overland journeys possible only with a land cruiser. It is extremely hazardous for its remoteness, or equally, militia violence.

The fact that I arrived on a Congolese-operated airline from Kinshasa is unheard of. To improve its image, the DRC government has banned former soviet era jets and pilots. Never the less, the NGOs I talk to say they are not allowed to take these planes, due to the high rate of crashes.

One street I walk down has a barbershop, amongst luggage shops, pots, pans, and more barbershops. The man in the barbershop takes great pleasure when I walk past. I've always got a smile for him, and he always has a smile for me. Another common scene: while walking around I often intersect with a large white *mzungu*-driven SUV and the street-business men. Because the *mzungus* in the SUV's can't walk, and don't walk, a meeting like this is restricted to the entrance of a shop. As soon as the big SUVs or Personnel Carriers stop, the small object sellers leap up from their inertness, rush to the windows, and foist their goods on them. It's a hectic scene. I was there before the SUVs arrived, and still there after they departed, though I doubt I ever get more than a passing glance. Maybe Alan, said I to myself, you are left alone because people think you are just really stupidly unfortunate not to have managed to finagle a big white car like the rest of the *mzungus*.

2.28

When the insurrections of 1964-65 revealed how poorly the Congolese army performed, the South African and European mercenaries (and bomber missions composed of Cuban exiles in the pay of the CIA) stepped in to prop up America's cold war ally.¹ With the mobilization of western interventionist brigades assuring western domination in the Congo, Mobutu seized power in 1965. America's contribution to the Congo was in no small way significant for the collapse of plurality in the post colony. When the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank threatened to withhold payments to Mobutu's kleptocracy, the full bore of American pressure on them kept aid-money flowing.² With international pressure alleviated, and financed secured, Mobutu was able to cauterize local political opposition through continued patronage funding and violence.

Mobutu's unrelenting efforts to thwart democratic opposition forces, his highly personalized style of rulership, built partly on repression and partly on extensive patronage networks, his scandalous squandering of the Congo's wealth, his megalomaniac obsession with grandiose development schemes at the expense of public goods for the masses, and his pathetic *sauf-qui-peut* attitude in the face of the relentless march of the AFDL on Kinshasa were critical factors in the ultimate collapse of his Bula Matari kingdom.³

By the end of the cold war, with little political incentive to keep hold of their geo-political dinosaur, the Americans withdrew their veto of IMF restrictions on Congolese funds. By this time Mobutu had accumulated some \$70 million USD of debt (having received over the course of his rule 1965-1988, some \$860 million USD)⁴. With the overnight collapse of Mobutu's patronage network, other means were initiated to counter growing antagonism to his rule. With the demands for democratic reform during this period, (fueled by Belgium, France, and the US), opposition parties were allowed in the Congo for the first time in 35 years. Democratic reform and the semblance of political plurality did

not mean Mobutu intended to relinquish power. Revision to the Second Republic's constitution in 1990 determined Mobutu alone could set the timetable for this democratic reform. While Mobutu gradually granted concessionary power to the public by organizing the National Conference (CNS) — later to become the High Council of the Republic (HCR) — disorganization within the opposition allowed Mobutu to continue his political factionalism and patronage through the now-legitimized semblance of democratic reform. On February 24, 1993 the civil guard surrounded opposition congregations so as to not allow members to leave for three days. On March 9th 1993, Mobutu called a conclave of HCR delegates in order to bribe them to switch sides, further dangling the prospect of an appointment to the position of prime-minister. Mobutu was able to overcome the opposition, despite his meager resources, because the polity was equally anemic.

Set against a quarter of a century of patrimonial rule, the organizational weakness of Zairian society must be seen as the logical consequence of the Mobutist state. Patrimonial rule sets sharp limits on the organization of independent power centers; state-society relations are mediated through personalized linkages, of a patron-client variety...The civil society is largely reducible to a congeries of kin groups and ethnic associations.⁵

2.29



I was sitting drinking a coffee today, drawing a picture as best I could. A middle aged Congolese lady saw this. '*C'est pas vrai?* Its really good' she says. Wow, she keeps exclaiming. Soon a few people were called over. 'So you can draw me next?', she jests. With resigned embarrassment I gave excuse I wasn't done the present set yet. She laughed and said, well when you're done I'm next. Of course, my friend.

A few times now, I've spent a few minutes sketching on a stoop next to the men selling shoes, or medicine, or bread. If a *mzungu* in a truck is commonplace, a *mzungu* walking is odd, then a *mzungu* sitting still is just suspect. By my own admission, the attention it drew always made me unsettled. It felt a bit like I was mocking the work of those beside me, so I gave up the practice.

2.30

Epilogue. *I ran away as fast as I could, and as far as I could, either to get my mind and my energy to disassociate, or to punish myself for my lack of effort. You simply cannot outrun cowardice and shame; you simply cannot suppress violence with more violence. I came back to the hotel later, looping back with enough distance to avoid the rest of the incident. I saw more military men on the way back, sitting around, standing smoking. This time I saw they had uniform pants. For all the city cared to show me in the empty streets, these men had just finished an irrelevant game of cards. There is nothing to record her pain.*

It is an utterly vicious thing to have to interrogate right and wrong. Does the banality of evil rely on the abstraction of violence, the indifference to the unavoidable? Or do the latent failings of bottom-up responses to structural issues risk further antagonism and violence. Brute force, for all I know, is a shallow path. I am furious. No notion of good in isolation will ever be good. With no lineage of action, no consensus of justice, the concept does not exist. There is nothing to be done. It does not matter. The rightful authorities of the state will not come to protect its citizen when it is the state that is the criminal.

On my way back I flagged down a moto-taxi standing in the middle of the same road. I stopped him and asked whether he had seen anything, or if he came up to it while driving, whether he could warn me. He looked at me with indifference. 'What do you want me to do. This is the Congo'.

All the best Victor.

Alan

2.31

Since the official end of the Second Congo War in 2003, western intervention has tended to focus on issues of progress. Where the war saw some 5 million Congolese dead, the issues surrounding the collapse of the Congo tended to focus on its status as a Leviathan problem.¹ The absence of, the rule of law, of the state, of order, could be addressed by promoting liberal democracy: “in various UN documents, elections marked a ‘turning point in the history of the Congo’ and heralded an era of peace, democracy, and social development.”²

Proof, for the Americans and the British, lay squarely in the post-genocidal success of Rwanda, as compared to the Congo. The astronomical developmental progress was described by Bill Clinton as having “freed the heart and the mind of his people”.³

As Severine Austesserre points out in her book *The Trouble with the Congo*, the push towards democratization in the post-conflict polity of the Congo largely short-sided local conflicts. By painting local conflict as subsidiary to national issues, the UN could put out the residual grass-fires by building the power of the state.

As a UN official described, a state-building process oriented at the macro level would provide the Congo with legitimate state authorities who would subsequently address the “law and order” problems in the eastern provinces.⁴ For the UN, the organization of elections was seen as apolitical (in the sense of a non-colonial interference within a sovereign state), and centrally executable (logistically focused around heads of states, and capital cities).⁵ The bias that national issues held, — “legislative and constitutional process or the tensions within the Transitional Government”⁶ — took greater precedent over events occurring in the territories. Accordingly, the rhetoric of development drew focus away from conditions occurring in the territories: “the psychological disconnect between elections and peace had become such that diplomats envisioned the possibility of

a successful completion of the ‘transition to peace and democracy’ even in the event of renewed war.”⁷ Holding elections in the Congo was equivalent with democracy *tout court*. Violence in the Kivus, as seen since the end of the Congo war until the present day, was transmuted in the ‘post-conflict’ landscape, in turn displacing its significance (as war cannot exist in peace) so that development remained the greatest priority.

Most countries, as well as the UN, claimed to be involved in the Congo primarily out of humanitarian interest. They accordingly devoted most of their bilateral aid for the Congo to humanitarian or development projects rather than to political or security ones.⁸

The West’s support for Kagame — despite the fact that Uganda and Rwanda were instrumental to the neo-colonial war machine in the Congo, and the rise of mineral-exploitation — centered on his ability to convert foreign aid into recognizable physical and economic development. In an article written for the *New York Times*, a diplomat explains why the West has heaped praise on Kagame:

Kagame has become a rare symbol of progress on a continent that has an abundance of failed states and a record of paralyzing corruption...You put your money in, and you get results out,” said the diplomat... “Yes, Kagame was “utterly ruthless,” the diplomat said, but there was a mutual interest in supporting him, because Kagame was proving that aid to Africa was not a hopeless waste and that poor and broke countries could be fixed with the right leadership.⁹

2.32

It being my last day in the DRC before going on to Rwanda, I wanted to say goodbye to the good people I'd met. For lunch I sat with Aden, and for dinner I sat with Seth. Aden, the Bosnian Muslim ex-German soldier turned UN civilian worker, had reached a breaking point. Not that it was a surprise; his embodied order and efficiency was in daily complete conflict with the realities around him. An alcoholic for sure, his unhappiness could be summed up by the way he collapsed. Into his sixth or so Heineken, he called over the girl working at Salt and Pepper. She, as far as I could tell, worked every day of the week. Or damn near it. Young, maybe 16 or 17, she was there from opening 'till closing. She dressed stylishly, a different outfit daily, maybe because work was the only place she appeared to the world. Because Aden was at Salt and Pepper (an Indian restaurant) nearly every day during his free hours they regularly exchanged friendly jokes. He said to her now, "You know what the problem with the Congo is?" I had assumed he was referring to the war. "that all the Congolese are lazy bloody bastards. I can't think of a single one that is capable of doing an honest days work. The Congo should be bombed, the UN should level the whole country with its planes. Leave it to the chimpanzees then, they could run it better than these Congolese. Look at the Rwandans, that is paradise! And this, this is a shithole!" I felt really bad for him, and worse for the girl who had to take this racist outburst. Thankfully it was in English, which is not widely understood in the Congo. Despite this diatribe, on the absolute fringe of day-to-day experience for most foreigners, I don't think Aden is actually racist, nor even an elitist. I have seen his respect for the hard work of the Nigerian Chief of Security for an NGO, talk jovially with the Indian UN medic and the Indian bar owners. Or more to the point, we have all sat and drank with a local customs officer many times. Today was different because it seemed like a wider systematic conflict between ideals of order, prejudice

and reality. He is not the first to say that Rwanda is a paradise for Africa, this banal comment being a sign of greater disquiet. It does not feel like a clash of two altogether incompatible systems (the North and order, the DRC and disorder), but a form of engagement between the two, both simplistic and short-circuited. It is unfortunate the false assumption amongst so many *mzungu* that violence is preceded by poverty, and that poverty is preceded by laziness and incompetence. It is as if *Tin-tin in the Congo* has reached the modern age.

My farewell dinner with my Congolese friend is odd too, largely due to the presence of his girlfriend. We eat at the European restaurant merely for geographic convenience, but her overly fussy demands are distracting. It is a shame. Seth and his father had no reason to help, or ensure my comfort, but they did, by many orders of magnitude. It seems likely she doesn't particularly respect my presence in Goma or with Seth.

Later we take some motos to his sister's house out past the university. The outer walls are typically decrepit but the gate opens to a courtyard with clearly-for gardens and a smattering of buildings. In all, we are Seth, his sister, her husband, his sister and mother in their small living room. The men in the room keep the conversation simple and cordial. The women are too curious for that. They immediately suss out that there is more to my story than I am letting on. In particular, Seth's sister-in-law is outlandishly jovial and direct. I wish I could remember her name. In the instance of us all chatting, she was serious and frank. With a grounded-ness I seldom heard from either camp, she spoke of her frustrations and her cares. It was especially powerful to hear this strong voice from a woman. Hopefully, in a general sense, these voices carry well past the domestic scene.

PART III:

Discover Rwanda Youth Hostel | 1993

KIGALI, RWANDA



GOMA,
DRC

GISENYI,
RWANDA

[Fig. 3.1]

3.1

This morning at six o'clock, bag packed, I set out to cross the Rwandan border. It is only about eight hundred meters from my hotel; in fact I had passed it numerous times before. Rwanda, as opposed to the Congo, is a remarkable easy country to enter. I had first applied for a visa a few weeks ago, with the idea that should the situation in the Congo reach an untenable limit I would take the back-door out to Rwanda. However, finding Goma quite attractive, I let the first visa expire. Rather than fly back to Kinshasa where my return-flight waited, I decided I would re-apply for a Rwandan visa. No problem. Unbelievably for Congolese standards, the process is done online, takes all of three days to process, and costs 40 USD. None of this can be said for the ease of attaining a Congolese visa.

The Congolese side of the border is, as expected, rather confusing. As always, finding the right man, to get the right papers, to bring to the other right man is needlessly inefficient. Once through, the female guard searches me despite the fact I have nothing to declare. Plastic grocery bags, which are not permitted in Rwanda, are confiscated from my pack. My wet shoes, now liberated, foul the rest of my bag.

At least in a car, or a plane, there is a certain degree of abstraction with border crossings, the myth is at least somewhat believable with its temporal and spatial disconnect. None of that exists when walking across an international border.

Rwanda, I think on. The over-simplification of racial conflict (Hutu and Tutsi) as foremost and eternal in the great lakes regions, particularly post-genocide, seems to reduce a wider complex history to singular event, and the genocide to its apotheosis. Madness or Barbarity. Though in certain instances true, the simplest explanations seems the most self-serving.

3.2

By the time the Belgians left Rwanda in 1962, their colonial alliance with the Tutsi minority had expired. By 1958 Belgian allegiance had turned sharply to supporting the Hutu majority they once oppressed. The Hutu Revolution of 1959-1962 would not have succeeded without the logistical and material backing of both Belgium and its soft-surrogate, the Christian church. In the post colony, financial and development aid gave arms-length credibility to the ruling Hutu, just as Colonialism's practice of indirect rule artificially elevated the power of the Tutsi monarchy. Rhetorically, if the church saw religious and moral depravity as a source of entry into Rwandan society, the new entry point for the international community would be technical development. For the desolately poor nation ruled by one successive oppressive Hutu regime after another, the years prior to the genocide of 1994 saw successive waves of foreign aid, to the extent that Rwanda boasted one of the highest densities of foreign technical assistance across Africa. Prior to 1994, the international community largely saw Rwanda as a promising young nation, whose structural stability made it ripe with solvable problems. Rwanda boasted a growing GDP, the semblance of social welfare, with high rates of food and medicine availability, and a trust of NGO's and cooperatives within civil society.¹ In a World Bank report from 1976 (3 years after the second military coup that brought new radical Hutu's to power) the Memorandum on the Economy of Rwanda stated that:

despite these handicaps [low income, an embryonic modern sector, a land shortage, rapid population growth, and its inland position] the present Government . . . has made perceptible progress in developing a strategy to lift the economy from its present low level.²

Fifteen years later, and three years prior to the genocide, Rwanda was presented in the same terms: "despite these constraints, Rwanda has made a creditable effort toward economic and social development".³ This trust in the progress of state formation would

see exceptional amounts of fiscal aid directed towards the Rwandan government. The World Bank estimates that in the period 1982 to 1987 foreign assistance financed over 70% of public investment. In the reports, the problems facing Rwanda were poverty, high population and environmental erosion. These technical problems could be remedied by Western intervention. Much like Abraham Kaplan's law of the instrument⁴, the World Bank and most NGO's largely ignored political realities even after civil war, with its sharp increase in ethnic rhetoric, had broken out in 1990. "In its mission to combat the burdens of poverty, the World Bank repeatedly hailed the country's political stability (World Bank 1984, 1; 1986, 2; 1989, 3), as well as its concern for the rural population, its effective administration, and its prudent, realistic management (World Bank 1989, 2; 1989, 3; 1991, 1; 1991, 1)."⁵ Against these claims, Peter Uvin in his book *Aiding Violence*, argues that the myth of apolitical intervention permitted intervention to occur as if untouched by sensitive political questions. In other words, the political realities of Rwanda did not exist.

Ethnic inequality; institutionalized, state organized racism; regional politics; lack of dignity and self-respect; the generalized presence of impunity and fear in the absence of justice; human rights violations; the oppressive presence of the state, and the like are emphatically not parts of this "solvable problem" or of the mandate of development agencies; they are thus evacuated, ignored, consider not to exist.⁶

Paid for by international actors, the narrow focus of development, inadvertently legitimized the central state, while altogether failing to benefit those targeted by the programs. For Peter Uvin, the aggrandizement of the central state, with the marginalization of the citizenry, created an acute system of structural violence.

3.3

Rwanda is 'paradise', so they say - at least, in comparison to Goma's purgatory. It is liberating enough getting out of the Congo for sure, but I have little understanding why Rwanda has this label. Several cabs wait on the other side of the border. I walked along the lake. Gisenyi, where it is wealthy it is indeed beautiful, but so is Goma. The bus station, which I have a great deal of trouble finding, is a depressing place. Set on top of a big hill, men with missing arms, legs, eyes, or sanity, all desperately seek welfare from those with mobility, (read: wealth). ten or so bus companies vie for your three USD ticket. 'Please sir, I spoke to you first', 'don't trust him, he's a cheating liar, his bus company is a scam', 'buy from me', 'who's the liar'? I arbitrarily choose the first guy's bus and got on. Eventually he extracted himself from the tussle and gives me my ticket.

The bus from Gisenyi leaves exactly on time. It doesn't wait until it's full. We weave our way through the basket hills, every fertile hill terraced and immaculately irrigated. The road itself is perfect. A spandex-clad Rwandan cyclist mounted on a carbon-fiber road bike climbs the hill out of Gisenyi. There are bikes in Goma too, for sure, they are just made out of wood slats, driven by youthful boys, and exclusively for the purpose of hauling cargo. For the sake of their uniqueness these *tshukudu* are worth elaborating on. A frame of two planks of wood intersect to make a cross about 2 meters long and 1 and a half meters high. The vertical plank is used to steer the affixed front wheel, while the horizontal beam supports the load. The driver kneels on the beam with one leg and pushes with the other. To make the kneeling easier, a flip-flop sandal is mounted to cushion the knee, while a stopping-block is added to support the foot.

There were some kids speeding along with these things at the refugee camp. I asked if I could challenge one of them to a race down the hill, which they enthusiastically accepted. But then I chickened out. The roads in Congo are dirt and pocked; they are not perfectly paved like in Rwanda.

3.4

I am sitting on the back deck of a hostel in Kigali. From the hill we stand on, there is a tranquil if not pastoral view of the valley below. We are in a walled compound again, though given the sparse population of this government neighborhood I am not quite sure who we are keeping out. In fact, the whole government district is quite sleepy. The hostel is quite popular with all sorts of westerners. A Dutchman designing HVAC for a brewery, a Finn visiting his Swedish NGO girlfriend, an American cop, French hippies. The list is common, and pretty endless.

The building is not particularly noteworthy, more from its conformity to western standards than its lack of quality. 20 USD a night in a mixed-four dorm room. There is an outward facing deck, squat and long, and there is an inward facing deck, sprawled with orange couches and tables with ashtrays. Everyday, for several days now, the boys have passed every waking hour drinking on the front patio of the hostel. They only really get up to buy cigarettes around the corner or get something to eat. The Dutchman says he is working, the Swede that he is lazy, and the American that he is broke. It is a strange breed of tourist that frequents Rwanda.

Kigali is a desperately sprawling town. Seeing as the roads follow the topography and not a regular order, navigating the plethora of hills on foot is tough. I often give up and take a moto-taxi. Unlike the DRC, Rwandan ATM's dispense Rwandan francs (RF). And also unlike the DRC, the highest franc denomination (5000 RF) is worth about 7 USD. I noticed that there is a casino across the street in an upmarket hotel. The American cop and I figured we'd check it out. It's just an ordinary hotel, with a convention room retrofitted with gambling games. We are the only westerners present though the room is full. The servers are the only Rwandans. The host is a burly Eastern European man. The gamblers are all Chinese. This is the first and last encounter I had with Chinese nationals in either Congo or Rwanda.

3.5

The historic failing of development in Rwanda, according to Peter Uvin, stemmed from the state's appropriation of aid for its own *elite évolué*, leading to an oppressive system of patronage and wider structural violence against the larger population. The omnipresent and highly influential aid system, did little to question the political system it fed.¹ He points to the continued use of ID cards as an example. "[N]o aid agency ever denounced the official racism or the quota system or the ethnic IDs—not even in the 1990s, when it was clear that they were being used to prepare for mass killings".² Used up until 1993, ID cards embodied class and ethnic segregation by stipulating where one could visit or work.

Police conduct periodic checks, especially in urban areas, and return all those not registered in the locality to their own commune. Property owners who do not require tenants to show valid documentation are subject to fines and even imprisonment. Undocumented tenants are subject to expulsion.³

The government argued the measures prevented urban blight by disallowing poverty from spreading. As the state apparatus controlled the largest opportunities for wealth accumulation, the practice isolated the urban elite from the rural masses. Resource distribution, starting from foreign aid, funneled to the centralized government, then channeled outward, discriminated along ethnic lines, wealth lines, and political lines, creating a system of rural poverty and urban prosperity reminiscent of colonial patrimonial exclusion⁴.

Projects like the 4.5 million USD, Mutura Agriculture Development Project (OVAPAM), from 1974–1987, with stated goals of reducing erosion, increasing population, and donating large tracts of land to rural farming, ultimately failed on technological, fiscal and social fronts.

...A small group of people managed to obtain most of the advantages of the multi-million-dollar project: jobs inside and outside the project; free land to be cultivated by family members, renters, or political clients; and large

herds overgrazing at the expense of the original Tutsi and Hima herdsmen.⁵ For Uvin and Lemarchand, the traditional framing of the project as a failure of mismanagement and ignorance, missed the wider political realities of Rwanda.

To view the OVAPAM project simply as an effort to improve the material conditions of the “poor” thus leaves out at least two major intervening variables: the manner in which ethnicity affects the definition of the “poor” and how traditional forms of social organization [clientelism] operate to incorporate the poor into the social matrix of the Mutara. . . . The social dynamics operating in the project area proved largely incompatible with the very objective of rural development as defined by the Bank, in effect denying the poor access to the resources, services and institutional support structure that might have allowed them to move up the economic and social ladder.⁶

The paradox of development in Rwanda was that its uniquely strong centralized state - with top-down authority able to enact development projects – was also adept at depriving ordinary citizens of the ability to affect the conditions they were subject too. Failings that were pinned on the rural farmer and not on what was perceived as a competent state structure, succeeded largely in reinforcing the central power of the state, and not the intended recipients.

The ideological tenets of the “developers” and the political requirements of the powers that be join in defining development largely without people’s input, without much respect for poor people, and often without much benefit to them.⁷





3.6

By the time the Belgians took possession of the westernmost portion of German East Africa, officially called Ruanda-Urundi in 1922, the Tutsi monarchy had already established its dominant position within the larger area of what is modern day Rwanda. With the help of the German colonists in the second half of the 19th century, the northern unconquered regions fell into the fold of the Tutsi monarchy.¹ Paralleling the consolidation of Tutsi hegemonic power, the rise of tribal myth to justify the colonial exclusion underpinned the implosion of future ethnic violence. Foremost, the dominant tribal terms — Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa — seen contrastingly as socio-economic labels akin to class, or as ethnic, if not racial descriptions, have historically held varying degrees of codification based on need.² In the colony and the post-colony, the purpose of myth and mythmaking largely stood to delineate the wider group's cohesion both inside and out, in addition to the extent of the legitimate authority it could project. Early recorded Tutsi mythology, such as the myth of Kigwe, centered on the inherent political division created by god:

So as to test their dependability, God decided to entrust Gahutu, Gatutsi, and Gatwa each with a pot of milk to watch over during the night. When dawn came, gluttonous Gatwa had drunk the milk; Gahutu had gone to sleep and spilt his milk; only the watchful Gatutsi had stayed up through the night to keep guard over his milk.³

With the natural ability of the Tutsi stereographically encoded, the monarchy enacted a system of land ownership and servitude akin to serfdom, justified by their claim to rightful rulership. Colonial mythmaking, by way of the Hamitic hypothesis, similarly build on the exclusion of the Hutu and the Twa. By weaving a narrative of social supremacy, the Belgians, like the Tutsi, cauterized the existing hierarchy. The Hamitic myth achieved this by projecting European genealogy to one group (the Tutsi) and foreignness to the other (the Hutu). Along with the myth of Christian European's

supremacy told by the biblical Curse of Canaan, the Hamitic hypothesis justified support for the Tutsi based on their brush with 'grace' from their origins as Ethiopian Christians. As the myth goes, these pastoral 'Europeans,' passing down the Nile, were more 'civilized' than their darker, agriculturalist Negro brethren. The European creation myth, similar to that of the Tutsi, was a pretense to justify collusion with the Tutsi. "Tutsi superiority was manifested in their tall, arresting physique, their extraordinary capacity for self-control, and their ability to exercise authority."⁴

From the origin-myths of colonialism, the invented myths of Tutsi supremacy continued in the years before independence. Rwandan historiographers, like Alexis Kagame, in publication like *Code des Institutions Politiques du Rwanda Pré-colonial*, published in 1952, tried to align Rwandan history with its acute political goals, by portraying the Tutsi monarchy as having the seeds of a European constitutional monarchy. He argued the Tutsi kingdoms history of pre-legal customary codes was innately legal in spirit. Presented as a history of the Tutsi, the aims of the publication were strategically political.

Kagame's painstaking reinterpretation of traditional Rwanda was consciously designed to influence the basic constitutional choices facing the Belgian trust authorities in the decade preceding independence.⁵

However, it was not until 1962 with the publication of Jan Vansina's work, *L'évolution du Royaume Rwanda des Origines à 1900*, that the image of the Hamitic-superior civilization imposing its rule on the inferior-vanquished tribes lost credence to a far more mixed lineage.

Ironically, much of what made the Hamites so captivating in the Europeans' eyes turned out to be the result of selective cultural borrowing from the supposedly inferior agricultural societies.⁶

3.7



On first impression the Rwandans are by and large more reserved than the Congolese. There was no chatter on the bus ride to Kigali and it is much harder to extract a smile with my simple words. There can be no value judgment in this; Rwandans are a people I don't know.

Kigali is an immaculate city. It is by and large quite sterile, its modern infrastructure key to this image. Four-lane roads are all newly paved. Curbs are painted a hypnotic black and white. Hills are lined with manicured greenery. It is all seemingly maintained daily. There is no dirt or decay to speak of. Having come from Goma, where there is no regulation at all over the roads, it comes as a surprise that given the perfect roads in Rwanda moto-taxi passengers are required by law to wear a helmet. It is only a small gesture, but it nevertheless signals the presence of state order and regulation.

The work-and-order ethic is so inscribed in the national culture of Rwanda that the last Saturday of every month is dedicated to public service. Shops close down, and the city is patched up. Known as Umuganda, the practice predates colonialism in origin. Though communal in spirit — every able body member of society participates for the good of others — the work is legally enforced.

3.8

In the lead up to independence for Rwanda, the external enemy of the colonized, the Belgians, was largely replaced by the internal enemy of the oppressed, the Tutsi. To the Belgians, the main impetus of the Hutu revolution was populist and anti-monarchist (against the Tutsi king, Kigeli V). In comparison, it was the radical Tutsi elements (such as the *Union Nationale Rwandaise*), which clamored for independence.¹ With the Tutsi being dangerously close to Lumumba in the Congo, and Communist China, Belgium opted to shift support towards the Hutu. The Hutu revolution never tried to overcome the historic injustice it faced, it always wanted to invert it. After the murder of some 20,000 Tutsi and the exodus of up to 120 000 refugees to Uganda, Congo, Burundi, and Tanzania, the all-Hutu *Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu* (Parmehutu) won national elections.² By 1961 with nearly all communes across Rwanda in Hutu possession, Rwanda voted to become a Republic. At independence, on 1 July 1962 Rwanda became a Hutu hegemony. On the same date in Burundi, the Tutsi monarchy survived.

The outward similarity of Burundi and Rwanda — its size, similar demographic, shared colonial history, and poverty — did not mean that ethnicity was always the prime catalyst for violence in Burundi. As Lemarchand remarks, the dominant narrative in Burundi at independence was the factional strife between the royal Bezi and the Batare.³ It was not until the Hutu elite looked to Rwanda and saw an ideal polity that the ethnic framework shifted to mirror that of Rwanda. Fearing a Rwandan-like revolution in Burundi, the Tutsi elite transformed their fear into exclusion, which in turn led to insurrection. The insurrections were violently repressed until ultimately, under the banner of ethnic mythmaking, the implosion of ethnic tension culminated in the events of 1972.

3.9

One of the last things the boys and I do is hire some motos to take us to a football game. Outside the stadium there are blue and white hooligans and drunken dancers, fanatics and partygoers. I bought some tickets for us all, for around 3USD. It was either that, or 2USD. Lacking the slightest idea what the difference meant, we entered our allotted section, and found ourselves to be basically the sole occupants of the entire section. Around us, the rest of stadium was filling up. The extra money it turned out differentiates those who sit in the searing sun and those protected by a large overhead canopy. The match consists of the league's top team against the police. Or, an affiliate of the police. Whichever it is, they are called 'police' and they get a full police parade as they enter. Before the game starts, the rest of our section is filled with policemen in uniform. The game was a terrible display of quality; never have I seen a goal scored from a goal kick having ricocheted off the back of a witless defender, back over the head of the keeper, into the net. The hooligans went nuts taunting the police, only a hair short of starting a riot. The police maneuvered around the dividing fence into the fan section and started to arrest the spoilers. Woe to them. The entire mass of the stadium turned on the wolves in the sheep den, and whipped their fury at this over-extension of authority.

3.10

With an Irish tourist I just met, we visit the Rwandan genocide memorial. For those with prior knowledge of the events it is a simple, but effective, display of remembrance. Written by the victors of the war, the RPF, through the horrid stories of the victims - largely but not exclusively the 'Tutsi' - the display has the

double purpose of maintaining the past's presence, while subtly legitimizing the authority of the victors, the vanquishers of evil. In so doing the presentation negates near all political germinations of pre-war Rwanda. Politically this sort of selective remembrance and amnesia is beneficial to the consolation of power, by way of presenting the genocide as the sole political common denominator.

Unfortunately we arrived too late at the church of Ntarama where the April '94 massacre took place. It was here that some five thousand Rwandans took shelter in the church, only to be turned over by the clergy, and barbarically murder. We content ourselves with walking around the area; daily life just happens: dirt roads, motorcycles, fruit-stands, pedestrians and rain. Afterwards we hitch a ride back into Kigali. Although the events of the genocide happened twenty years ago, it is not a world frozen in time. Only one hundred kilometers to the west in Congo, or one hundred kilometers to the south in Burundi, the same ethnic/sectarian/government violence occurs. Settled dust is just that, settled dust. Violence is not spontaneous, it is calculated. Violence is not random, it is objective. What we praise Rwanda for, its achievement in development, is only half the story of legitimization.

3.11

What followed in the post-independence years for Burundi and Rwanda was the development of a field of radicalization manipulated by interconnected external and internal events, which ebbed and swayed racist public opinion.

With the end of Tutsi hegemonic rule in Rwanda, the transformation of Tutsi refugees into commando units threatening

to recapture Rwanda had the effect of increasing fear amongst the Hutu that their revolution would collapse. The attacks were enough to foment the polarization of Manichean exclusion. As Lemarchand writes,

[I]neffective though [the Tutsi raids] were in bringing down the republic [of Rwanda], the impact of these incursions on the radicalization of the Kayibanda regime has been profound. Several new elements, all of them harbingers of a future apocalypse, came into focus: (a) the growing identification of the enemies of the revolution with foreign enemies; (b) the conflation into the same subversive frame of exile and resident Tutsi elements, the latter supposedly acting as spies (*ibbiyetso*) for the former; and (c) the radicalization of the domestic arena through the elimination of moderates.¹

It was not Rwanda but Burundi, which would witness the first instance of genocide since World War Two. In the aftermath of the third failed Hutu coup (1965, 1969, 1972), the largely forgotten, rarely emphasized, and never prosecuted events of April to November 1972 saw some hundreds if not thousands of Tutsi killed during the coup, along with some one to two hundred thousand Hutu deaths in the ensuing retributive killings by the Tutsi army.

In an instance of mimetic rivalry and fear of the 'other', reverberating far beyond the immediate context, the events of 1972 would instigate reciprocal anti-Tutsi pogroms in Rwanda, ultimately paving the way for the 1973 bloodless coup against the more moderate Hutu Kayibanda, by the more radical Hutus from the north (historically outside the feudal Tutsi domain) under Juvénal Habyarimana.

3.12

With the Irish woman, we continue our tour of Rwanda. After going south to the church we head west, back towards Congo. Using Ruhengeri as a base we decide to climb a volcano in the 'parcs des volcans'. We hire a taxi to take us to the base of the mountain where a reception center funnels park visitors. Despite the early hour, maybe seven or so, there are a huge number of safari-clad *mzungus* mingling while local guides prepare the day. It is a beautiful morning. Almost cartoonishly so. Even for Rwandan standards, the environment is unblemished. It's as though the wealth that paid for the new buildings, manicured lawns, green hedges, and clean uniforms has also bought from the heavens the evanescent clouds, damp fields, and hazy distant mountains. We pay our 100USD park permit to climb the hill. Every other group present is here for the chance to see gorillas at some 700USD a person. Though significantly cheaper in the Congo, with the violence the parks are closed. Apart from the grounds and the personnel, I am not sure where all the money goes. Due to an unspecified risk, a corporal and a private of the Rwandan army, as well as our tour guide, accompany our ascent: three hours up, two down. Our guide is talkative and kindly to a fault. He is a robust, older man, with a history of climbing the mountain before the days of the park. We passed the site of Dian Fossey's murder. Some kids in tatters were kicking a ball around on our way back to the village. They had made a football from old fabric, paper and twine and were kicking it around. The bully that I am challenged them to a shoot out. Somehow, with a huge imaginary net at my disposal I still lost. Good lord those ankle-biters are nimble.

3.13

Sometime near the beginning of thinking about the Congo and Rwanda, I came across a story, which, in all likelihood I took out of context. It was a speech delivered in Detroit, to an audience of African-Americans. Here I paraphrase Malcolm X, 'You are free, but why are you still down'?¹ When the speech was delivered in 1963, the same questions applied to the Great Lakes region of Africa, if not most of Africa. 1960 was supposed to be the Year of Africa, the year the then Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah described as "...Africa's awakening upon the modern world"². In 1960, the Congo joined some sixteen other African colonies in celebrating independence. Rwanda and Burundi joined a year later. At least on paper, Africa was free. In reality it was not, and was never meant to be.

The part I cut out from the speech *Message to the Grass Roots*, was an allegory with three protagonists. The hero was a slave. The villain was the unknown master. Between them was the foil, the master's house.

...*Back during slavery*. There was two kinds of slaves. There was the house Negro and the field Negro. The house Negroes - they lived in the house with master, they dressed pretty good, they ate good 'cause they ate his food — what he left. They lived in the attic or the basement, but still they lived near the master; and they loved their master more than the master loved himself. They would give their life to save the master's house quicker than the master would. The house Negro, if the master said, "We got a good house here," the house Negro would say, "Yeah, we got a good house here." Whenever the master said "we," he said "we." That's how you can tell a house Negro.

If the master's house caught on fire, the house Negro would fight harder to put the blaze out than the master would. If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, "What's the matter, boss, we sick?" We sick! He identified himself with his master more than his master identified with himself. And if you came to the house Negro and said, "Let's run

away, let's escape, let's separate," the house Negro would look at you and say, "Man, you crazy. What you mean, separate? Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than this? Where can I eat better food than this?"³

The house Negro in the story was a slave, but he seemed to have forgotten that. Instead he looked to what little he had, what little he had been given, and saw his salvation from depravity there. If the master was the one who had created the system of slavery, the secondary character of the master's *house* was altogether better at keeping him there; something the master's *whip* alone could not do.

Although the whip was effective in transforming the native, or the primitive, into a docile beast of burden, it could never stem the growth of the irrational rabidity it created without the use of more violence. With violence alone, its' ultimate victory — the subjugation of the slave — would be no victory at all, since no master could rule over dead men.

If the whip only ever came as an opposing force's will, the house never acted against the personhood of the slave. Instead, it represented his salvation. Although his subjective depression still existed, it no longer mattered; the corporal improvements that conditioned his comfort were better than the depravity he would face if they were lost. The small satisfaction of bodily needs habituated the slave into forgetting his story, transforming him more effectively into a working animal. His human potential to act of his own course was replaced by the satisfaction of satiating nature's ever-reoccurring life process. From the idea of freedom meaning the ability to be born anew — in the image of one's self and not another's — freedom meant security against the fragility of bodily life.

To all but the most rhetorically-minded (and hypocritical), the

goal of a *better world* — built up and made secure — is a desirable end. However, failing to see the potential shortcomings of the modernizing enterprise is to jeopardize its good nature, either by legitimizing, or even engendering, violence. In its most crooked form, the development fetish of law and architecture has had the ability to obfuscate and normalize the actions of political regimes, historically to detrimental effects.

3.14

In its wake, the 1972 genocide of Hutus in Burundi would propagate radicalization of both the Hutu victims and the Tutsi elements in power. When the first Hutu was elected president of Burundi on March 28, 1993, the Tutsi army refused to accept the legitimacy of the polls. On October 21, 1993, Melchior Ndadaye was assassinated six months into his term. In the ensuing violence, some 20, 000 Tutsi were killed, with an equal number of Hutu killed by the army.¹ The Hutu recalled the violence of 1972 to justify the killings: “since 1972 it is our blood that’s being spilled! Now we hear that President Ndadaye has been killed. If they did that, that means we are next.”², while the Tutsi claimed the murder of their innocents revealed an attempt to wipe out the minority altogether. Preventative violence was justified in the face of future violence.

If the failed coup of 1972 sparked the genocide in Burundi, the civil war in Rwanda has been put forward as an important element in the development of genocidal rhetoric in Rwanda. Just as the Hamitic hypothesis praised the foreignness of the Tutsi, the myth

re-projected in its inverse form cast the Tutsi as an invasive foreign species. The war, seen from the Hutu majority, took the form of a vanquished oppressor, returning to subjugate the Hutu.

The Tutsi diaspora's invasion of north Rwanda largely underestimated the strength of the government in 1990, as well as the amount of aid the Habyarimana government would receive from foreign sponsors, France and Zaire. Zaire, under Mobutu, was historically anti-Museveni, and by extension anti-Kagame, while France balked at the possibility an English speaking Kagame would withdraw Rwanda from the Francophonie. Initially expected to be a quick coup, the war devolved into a protracted civil conflict. With the northern cash-crop region under threat by the rebels, the economy declined. As accounts of RPF atrocities spread, racist ideology was fomented in the media. The Hamitic myth returned with a vengeance. As Leon Mugesera, the Hutu 'boss' from Gisenyi said in a much-quoted encouragement to fellow Hutu, 'send the Tutsi back to their country of origins – Ethiopia – through the quickest route, via the Akanyaru river...' ²³ In other words dead.

3.15

One year into the civil war, multiparty democracy was introduced to Rwanda. If aid and development was brought to post-colonial Rwanda on the simplistic notion that order and stability was present, then democracy likely could not have come at a time of greater instability. The threat posed to the ruling elite by *multipartisme* did not bring about peace. Rather, the elites found a familiar enemy to scapegoat. By playing up the threat to Hutu

power, the state was able to corral moderates and opposition parties to fall in line against the common enemy.

Two things happened in 1993 that would touch off the radicalization of the genocide: the assassination of the Burundian Hutu president Melchior Ndadaye, and the signing of the Arusha peace accords in Rwanda. If the Burundian events provided evidence for the Rwandan Hutu that the Tutsi could not be trusted, the Arusha accords would see that the Tutsi would have to be trusted with governance. In the Arusha accord, the RPF would receive the same number of seats as the ruling National Movement for Revolution and Development (MRND), five out of twenty-one cabinet seats, and eleven out of seventy seats in the transitional national assembly.¹ Further, Tutsi in the armed forces would make up forty percent of the regular troops and fifty percent of the officers.² Just as Habyarimana radicalized political division between moderate and extremist factions of the three main opposition parties with the result they emerged his staunchest allies (once his bitterest enemies), an acceptance of Arusha's power-sharing measures would allow the RPF room to undo all that had been achieved since 1973. The greatest fear for the MRND was that Tutsi would form a coalition with southern political parties. The MRND's solution was to scuttle the peace accord through violence.³

There is still debate about who shot down Habyarimana's plane.⁴ Each side accusing the other: whether Tutsi RPF soldiers or extremists in Habyarimana's inner circle (the *akazu*). The killings started immediately after the plane went down. Whether the downed plane was orchestrated by Kagame, or by radical Hutu's bent on framing the Tutsi and removing the last specter of Arusha, the first people to be killed after the clash were politically motivated opponents, and not, as widely accepted, chosen by ethnic criteria.

Two categories of potential allies of RPF were targeted: (a) moderate (as distinct from “Hutu Power”) Hutu politicians from the south-central regions, most of them affiliated with the MDR [party of the former Hutu president Kayibanda] and (b) opposition leaders (Hutu and Tutsi)

3.16



The politics of intervention returned to Rwanda with the passe-partout given to Kagame’s government in the aftermath of the genocide.¹ The new Rwandan order would be framed in its simplest Manichean form: the bad (Hutu) were overcome by the good (Tutsi), while the innocent (Tutsi) were betrayed by Western inaction. Though to a large extent true, allowing the events to shape future action permitted one form of injustice to justify another. In first seeking vengeance against the Hutu in the refugee camps, indiscriminately reducing all Hutu to *génocidaires*, and then exacting imperial war on the Congo, and finally collapsing political space in Rwanda, Kagame has capitalized on the simple narrative’s culture of impunity.²

When Kagame attacked the Hutu refugee camps in 1996, which eventually led to the overthrow of Mobutu, his efforts took the pressure off of the international community. Within

these actions two problems were solved: the militarized refugee camps were dissolved, and the continent's out of favor 'dinosaur' was disposed of. When the UN special Rapporteur Roberto Garreton led a team of investigators into the Congo to investigate the Rwandan-backed, Tutsi-led murders of thousands of fleeing Hutu refugees, the team was stonewalled by Kabila (then under the auspice of Kagame). The team left the country without visiting a single gravesite.³

As the Second Congo War progressed — the death toll of disease and malnourishment in the millions — the development project of Rwanda, financed on the back of Congo wealth, was ignored by foreign donors. As Lemarchand notes, “[b]y turning a blind eye to the “imperial” designs of Rwanda and Uganda in eastern Congo, while at the same time rewarding their economic performance, donors (World Bank, the United States, and Great Britain) are in effect subsidizing their war effort.”⁴

Lastly, by restricting public space⁵, assassinating opposition figures⁶, and whitewashing ethnic identities in order to preserve ethnic superiority⁷, the West's 'favorite strongman' was able to propel Rwanda into the modern era with unprecedented speed. Aid-money continued unabated despite the oppressiveness of the regime.⁸

If the Congo would be solved by elections in their post-conflict renaissance, post-genocide Rwanda would be saved by development. Despite Rwanda having little strategic interest for the US or the UK, *New York Times* writer Jeffrey Gettleman explains how development driven foreign patronage for Kagame has reframed political exclusion in Rwanda.

Many of the diplomats and analysts I talked to weren't entirely bothered by Kagame's authoritarian streak. Some even told me — and maybe this has something to do with the low expectations for Africa — that this is exactly

what the continent needs: more Kagames, more highly skilled strongmen who can turn around messy, conflict-prone societies and get medicine in the hospitals and police officers on the street and plastic bags out of the trees. Liberties aren't so important in these places, the argument goes, because who can enjoy freedom of speech or freedom of the press when everyone is killing one another? A premium is put on preserving stability and minimizing physical suffering, saving lives from malaria, from hunger, from preventable, poverty-driven diseases that are endemic across Africa.⁹

POST-SCRIPT



In Hannah Arendt's 1971 book *The Life of the Mind*, she returned to the idea of narrative she first touched on in *The Human Condition*. Because the meaning of Action remains unclear until the action itself has disappeared, it is the storyteller who is needed to "straighten the story."¹ Namely this is because "[the participant] cannot see how all the particular things in the world and every particular deed in the realm of human affairs fit together and produce a harmony."² In Homer's *Odyssey*, Arendt points out, it is not until Odysseus hears the account of his quarrel with Achilles does he understand the significance of his action. "Odysseus, listening, covers his face and weeps, though he has never wept before, and certainly not when what he is now hearing actually happened."³

I grew up in a radical home, a home whose life and conscious center was the dining room table. Sundays especially — but more like every day — we sat at the table as a family; we ate for an hour, and talked for three. With the not wholly insensible rhetoric of a UN general assembly debate, we wrangled and bastardized foreign policy, customs and laws, and other rather impersonal ideas. Friends not used to this SNAFU rarely came over. They, my parents, had come from politics. Franco's rule of Spain had galvanized conviction in my mom about Autocracy; Labor unions and not universities educated my dad about Capitalism.

After high school, I went around Europe for half a year. At the same time, my brother travelled to Latin America. Briefly put, his trip was a sketch of illicit and illegal encounters. He spoke of a smuggling ship with passage from Panama to Colombia, of a boat full of fruit and contraband, two gringos and a crew of drunken sailors waiting a fortnight for the coast guard to clear. He found his way to a jail in Cartagena, and a soccer game with local youth-cum-thugs in Medellin. I was firmly protected on rhizomic

church streets and international train cabins. With the luxury of European rail services, I was able to visit larger hubs (cities) every few days, and wider voids (hinterlands) every night. Too poor to find paid accommodation, I stopped at whichever station seemed most desolate, found a suitably-absent farmer's field, and passed the night. Because it was winter, I had a sleeping bag. Because it often rained, I wrapped my sleeping bag in a tarp. The primitive cocoon produced daily a quasi-respectable citizen more-or-less accepted by the urban citizenry. When heading out of town was not feasible, I remained homeless in city parks, parking garages and other margins of city space. Really, only the Swiss had a problem with this.

A year later I went with a friend to West Africa. At about this time, my brother went to the Middle East. His trip, apart from a tour of historical Syria, Jordan and Israel, focused around Palestine. In Tallin, West Bank, he joined the non-violent ISM to protest Israeli settlement expansion. For his effort he was smacked with rubber bullets, beaten and spat on by the IDF, incarcerated by the Israeli courts, and eventually deported back to Canada. The reason: taking pictures. Ghana and Burkina Faso, for me, were nothing like that. That trip consisted of far less order and served in fact as a gentle introduction to disorder. In remote villages, beheaded goats and strangulated chicken were unfortunate victims of animistic rituals. Spatially-challenged bus rides (both materially and temporarily) complete with a putrid baby's skull pillowed beside my head for three days, a broken seat that crushed the knees of the poor man behind me, mechanical failure, pee breaks, dirt rain, drove me — and the rest of the bus — close to insanity. In Accra, the Ghanaian national fanaticism for their World Cup heroes, the black stars, was fantastic.

That I grew up regularly wayward in my thoughts — by way of making unfounded and ill-conceived connections between dissonant ideas — gave me a base for the rejection of authority. The notion that the world consisted of an insoluble order grated on my natural skepticism.

Of all the trips my brother and I have been on, I'm not sure which has been the most trying for my parents. When my brother's safety was threatened in South America and the Middle East, or mine in Africa, my parents somehow saw the merit in the abstract idea of knowledge as resistance. Potentially a result of the rabid intellectualism of our dining room table, I was begrudgingly permitted to go to the DRC. Unfortunately, this most recent round of travel did not have a sibling's spiritual companionship. When I went to the DRC and the great lakes region, my brother was in law school.

There was never a particularly good reason to choose the DRC. Vanity of course, is always present. Once, on a long isolated trip I read the *Heart of Darkness*. As an idolizing kid, I watched the *Rumble in Jungle* take place in a city suspended from reality by a million T.V. viewers' eyes. Most recently, I read Che Guevara's *Congo Diaries*. It was not really the mystery of such a wild place that sent me, or the particular ideological firmament of the region. First and foremost, like most generators of action I felt an indignation at the hypocrisy and abject misery of the world's modernizing project; most heavily felt at the margin of the world's conscious imagination.

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Postscript

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- 3 Ibid., 132

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